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ABSTRACT

This workbook was designed for use in conjunction with classroom instruction and the parent support group model. Its purpose is to help parents both prevent and effectively intervene in their children's unwanted behaviors, such as drug use and gang involvement. Based on the premise that children should be allowed to make choices and then be held accountable for those choices, the authors devised a sixteen-unit program which provides parents the techniques to improve their relationship with their children. Presented in two parts, Part One of the program lays the foundation for change. Topics in this section include strategies on understanding children, addressing problem behaviors -- with emphasis on adolescent drug use and youth gangs -- and developing personal action plans. Part Two discusses how to change behavior and improve the parent/child relationship. Offered are tips on parental support; understanding the dynamics of change; managing conflicts; active listening; communicating parent's views; building positive self concepts; being consistent; elaboration of expectations, standards, and values; and promoting family unity. The closing unit reviews the previous material and presents themes for parents to master. Included are handouts which can facilitate self-help support groups. (RJM)

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A Parent's Guide to ....

Changing Destructive Adolescent Behavior

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A Note From The Authors

This workbook has been designed for use with classroom instruction and the parent support group model. Parents are cautioned not to begin making changes at home until they have completed the instructional portions of this course and have a firm understanding of the material presented. Parents should seek the advice of mental health care professionals whenever possible.

Introduction

Learning to make the right decisions is a natural part of growing. Generally speaking, the older children get, the more decisions they should be allowed to make for themselves. As long as parents hold children responsible for their own decisions, children will learn by their mistakes and hopefully mature in the process.

A simple formula can be applied: **Choice + Accountability = Growth**

Example:

A parent allows a child to choose the time to start the child's daily household chores. The child chooses 8:00 PM. At 8:00 PM. the family is playing a game or watching the child's favorite television program. If the parent holds the child accountable for his/her choice and insures that the chores begin promptly at 8:00 PM., the child will soon learn that if he/she wants to watch his/her program, he/she will have to do the chores earlier in the day.

In this case, the LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE of starting chores late in the evening is missing a favorite television program. When the child gets tired of missing his/her favorite program the child will choose to start the chores earlier in the day.

This simple formula is widely accepted as the BEST method of teaching a child responsibility, mature decision making, and self discipline. However, there are exceptions. If a child chooses a destructive behavior such as drug or alcohol use, drinking and driving, or gang involvement, the LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES may be addiction, a ruined life, prison, or even the death of the child.

Parents can keep their children from destroying their lives, and that is the focus of this program. *Changing Destructive Adolescent Behavior* has been designed specifically for parents of strong willed or out of control children. This book was developed to help parents both prevent and effectively intervene in destructive behavior such as drug use and gang involvement.

Although this curriculum has been designed for the parents of strong willed or out of control children, most of the parenting techniques suggested can be useful in stopping any unwanted adolescent behaviors.

This workbook is dedicated to all those parents
who struggle to hold the line.

Special acknowledgment and thanks to Dr. Bonnie Burstein
for her willingness to share her expertise, commitment to families,
and ongoing support of this project.

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Part One

Laying the Foundation for Change

Unit 1: Understanding Our Children

What we need to know about strong-willed children and changing behavior

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Describe character traits of a strong-willed child
- Recognize successful ways to demonstrate love and affection
- Discuss issues of influence versus control
- Describe effective parenting strategies to increase or decrease behavior

Before we begin Unit 1:

Choose someone you do not know to be your partner. Ask each other the following questions. Please write down your partner's answers.

1. What is your partner's name?

____

2. What are the names and ages of your partner's children?

______________________________ ______________________________

______________________________ ______________________________

______________________________ ______________________________

______________________________ ______________________________

3. What does your partner hope to learn from this class?

____

____

____

____

After getting your partner's permission, introduce your new friend to the group using the above information.

Strong-willed vs. Compliant Children

Parents with compliant children usually do not understand what all the fuss is about, while parents of strong-willed children usually end up questioning their own ability to parent effectively. For parents of strong-willed children, quiet family conversations usually end in arguments or screaming matches and simple parental requests are met with loud complaints or open refusals to cooperate.

Generally speaking, strong-willed adolescents learn about life by trying it themselves. They do not accept parental input nor are they willing to use the mistakes of others as learning experiences for themselves. The frequently heard adolescent phrase, "It's OK, that won't happen to me," is especially true for this child, which is why just talking to the strong-willed child about unwanted behavior is generally ineffective. Their stubbornness, curiosity and desire to experience things first hand, usually means they will do what they want, even when they know they are breaking the rules.

Activity 1.1

Working by yourself or with your spouse, choose the five words/phrases below that best describe your child's personality. Please circle your answers.

1. Calm	6. Emotional
2. Easy-going	7. Strong-willed
3. Willing to listen	8. Argumentative
4. Understanding	9. Stubborn
5. Compliant	10. Challenging

If three or more of your answers are in the column on the right, chances are you have a strong-willed child and traditional parenting techniques may not be effective. While it is true that compliant children are sometimes more susceptible to peer pressure, it is the strong willed child who is more likely to expose himself to destructive adolescent behavior.

A research work on crime in the United States (*Crime and Human Nature,* James Q. Wilson) explains there are four main factors that led nearly all of the youth studied into a life of crime:

Lack of discipline
Lack of supervision
Negative peer influence
Lack of demonstrated love and affection

Considering the dangers of drug use or gang involvement, the presence or lack of these factors in a child's life can mean the difference between life and death. We will take a close look at each of these factors during the next few weeks.

Love and Affection

The three most powerful words in any language are, "I Love You." Any parent who understands the importance of these three words, and practices them daily, will have mastered the single most important element of successful parenting.

Love and affection is the key to effective parent/child communication and discipline, and plays a vital role in building a child's self esteem. In fact, children often involve themselves in destructive behavior because they do not believe their parents love or care about them. (The bumper sticker, *Have you hugged your kid today*?, was originally developed to help parents keep their children from using drugs and alcohol.)

When parents are asked if they love their children, the usual response is, "Of course I do." But, when asked, "When was the last time you told your son or daughter that you love them?", the responses are mixed.

Simply loving children is not enough. Parents' love for their children must be **expressed.** Many parents, especially fathers, often find it difficult to tell those closest to them how they feel. It is essential for children to know they're loved today for who they are, and not what they might become. Children are "now" oriented. They seldom think of the future and do not usually hold onto parental messages from one day to the next. For these reasons, most experts agree parents' love for their children should be communicated daily.

When teenagers are having difficulties, a parent's expression of love may not be openly acknowledged by the child. Nevertheless, love must be expressed daily. Hugs and kisses and pats on the back are great. They all help to show love and affection to a child. But, there is no replacement for a meaningful, "I love you". These three words can work magic and are irreplaceable in changing destructive adolescent behavior.

Working In Support Groups

Most of the parenting techniques discussed in the large group will be learned and practiced in smaller support groups. Therefore, before we begin our first group activity, it will be necessary to divide into support groups of about four members each. Working in a support group allows each member to draw from the parental experiences of their entire group, thereby increasing learning and understanding. Support groups work best when each member is assigned to and performs one of the following *group roles:*

Group Facilitator: The group "task master" keeps the group on task and insures that the group follows through with the format of each activity.

Group Time Keeper: Monitors the time allotment during all support group activities. Helps the group complete activities by giving a one minute warning to the group before the end of the allotted time.

Group Recorder: Records group responses/answers during activities. Reports the group's answers to the large group at the end of each activity.

Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders: Help the group to focus on the positive. Give positive strokes to individual members. Promotes each member's participation. Discourage judgmental language and behavior.

The *group roles* described above should be rotated among support group members on a weekly basis.

Group Activity 1.2

Working with your support group, take a minute to elect **every** member to one of the *group roles* below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleader(s):

Before we move on to the next activity, let's examine a few *ground rules* for working in groups:

> ***Confidentiality:*** *Trust between group members* is the foundation for group success. In order to develop trust, people must feel sure of confidentiality. Confidentiality is generally interpreted as, "What is heard in the group, remains in the group."
>
> **Avoid Being Judgmental:** Each support group should be a safe, comfortable and positive place to share your feelings and stories. Support groups are not a place for judgment, criticism or confrontation. Planned activities require the brain power of the entire group to be successful and judging responses often shuts down the creative process.

When working with your group on *Brainstorming Activities* the following additional norms should be included:

> **Quantity vs. Quality:** There are no right or wrong answers in brainstorming activities. Members should contribute to the group whatever ideas come to mind. Be as creative as possible; don't worry about the merit of the idea.
>
> **Okay to Piggy Back:** When a member can add to another member's idea, they should do so. Once an idea or thought has been spoken aloud, it belongs to the group.

Group Activity 1.3

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to list examples of ways parents can convey love and affection to their children. Remember to consider the ground rules in brainstorming norms.

1. *Example:* Saying, "I Love You".
2. *Example:* Cooking for your children.
3. *Example:* Spending time with your children.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

Group Activity 1.4

Now, of the examples you have listed, how many will a child generally recognize as love or affection? *(Note: usually there will only be three)*

Ways of expressing love that my child will certainly recognize:

1.
2.
3.

Parents want their children to know they are loved and the three examples listed above will usually work. Parents who find it difficult to tell their children they are loved will usually feel comfortable with at least one of the other examples.

Remember, when parents and children argue and tempers flare, the words, "I love you", are spoken less and less. For the parents who are able to put their anger aside long enough for an "I love you" at bedtime, change will be less painful. Without open displays of love and affection, discipline, structure, communication and the family itself will suffer greatly.

How do adolescent children generally think and act?

Group Activity 1.5

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to discuss and answer the questions below.

1. Do children usually plan for tomorrow or do they live for today?
   Answer: Children ________________________________

2. Do children generally consider the feelings of others or do they think of themselves first?
   Answer: Children________________________________

3. Are children usually willing to wait or do they want it now?
   Answer: Children________________________________

4. Are children more likely to think things through or to act on emotions?
   Answer: Children________________________________

5. Do children generally respond quietly or angrily when parents tell them, "NO"?
   Answer: Children respond____________________________

Adolescent children generally act and think as they do not because they are *bad*, but because they are *young*. When parents understand how their children think and are likely to respond, parents will be in a better position to positively influence their children's behavior.

Influence vs. Control

Parents of strong-willed children can often be heard to say they have *lost control* of their child. This is simply not true. In order to **lose control**, a parent must first **have control**. Parents do not control children. If we truly had control, none of our children would drop out of school, use drugs, become pregnant, or join gangs. Parents must realize that children control their own actions; the sooner we give up the notion of control, the more effective we will be.

Activity 1.6

Take a few moments to reflect on your own childhood. Record one instance when, as an adolescent, you severely broke the house rules, or otherwise disobeyed your parents.

____

____

2. In the instance you described above, were your parents able to **control** your behavior?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What parents do have is a great deal of influence. In fact, parents are the most important role model for their children. For example, between the ages of 12 and 25, approximately 50 percent of a child's values are formed from his/her parent's value system. The remaining 50 percent is formed by the child's environment and peers. Between the ages 25 and 30, another 30 percent of a child's values are taken from his/her parent's values and 20 percent is formed by personal experience. Because parents are such powerful role models for their children, if new parenting strategies can be learned, destructive adolescent behavior can generally be changed or prevented.

Influencing and Motivating Children

Parents can motivate strong-willed children to change by providing positive strokes or positive consequences for desired behaviors and negative consequences for unwanted behaviors. Parents should recognize or give positive strokes to their children when they catch them doing something right.

Example: A parent sees his/her child reading a book instead of watching television. A parent who wanted to increase reading behavior could say, "I can't tell you how good it makes me feel to see you reading a book."

This type of recognition or positive stroke increases the probability the child will read again in the near future.

Group Activity 1.7

Working with your support group , take a few minutes to list some behaviors for which a child should be given a positive stroke by his/her parent.

1. *Example:* Taking out the trash without being asked.
2. *Example:* Helping a younger brother or sister.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Remember, it is easier to increase wanted behaviors than it is to decrease unwanted behaviors.

A second powerful way to increase desired behavior comes from positive consequences, such as giving children access to the things or activities they want after they have complied with a parent's request.

Example: *A parent returns home and finds his/her child watching television. Knowing the child has unfinished homework, the parent instructs the child to turn off the TV. The parent explains the TV. may be turned back on as soon as the homework is completed and approved by the parent.*

In this case, the positive consequence for the child is being allowed to watch television after the homework is completed.

Group Activity 1.8

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of situations parents should create at home to allow their child to experience positive consequences. Make sure that every situation contains a specific desired behavior and identifies a positive consequence.

1. *Example:* "You can use the telephone, as soon as you finish drying the dishes."
2. *Example:* "You can go to your friend's house, as soon as your room is clean."
3.
4.
5.

When parents use both positive strokes and positive consequences frequently, it tends to increase positive behaviors and helps children feel better about themselves.

Negative consequences should be used for unwanted behaviors or broken house rules. Negative consequences usually mean the removal of the things or activities our children enjoy.

Example: *If a child breaks the house rule by coming home late one hour past his/her curfew, the negative consequences could be the removal of all of the things and activities the child enjoys for one day (24 hours).*

Negative consequences for broken house rules or unwanted behaviors should fit the way children think, **not** the way parents think. For example, because children live for today and are not usually willing to wait for what they want, consequences should generally be short term (one to three days long for adolescents).

Short term consequences help to keep children from feeling like they are on *Death Row* and from subsequently rebelling because they think they have nothing else to lose. Short term consequences are far more effective in changing behavior. Short term consequences work because they fit the way children think, not the way parents think.

Group Activity 1.9

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to list some unwanted behaviors or broken house rules for which a child should be given negative consequences.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Although parents cannot control their children, parents can control the things their children enjoy such as telephones, television, toys, freedom for activities and junk food. While children may not be willing to work for the things ***we*** want, they will usually work for the things ***they*** want. By controlling the things children want, parents can motivate children to change unwanted behaviors.

By using positive strokes, positive consequences and negative consequences consistently, parents can increase their influence and motivate strong-willed children to change their behavior.

Review Activity 1.10

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. If parents have a strong-willed child, traditional parenting techniques may not _______________________.

2. Parents must tell their children how much they are loved every ______________.

3. Although parents cannot control their children, parents can control the _______________ their children enjoy.

4. Parents should give their children positive ___________________ when they catch their children doing something right.

5. ______________ term consequences are more effective than long term consequences because they fit the way children think.

strokes **day** **work** **Short** **things**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this Unit?
____

*Note: The homework assignments found at the end of each unit, are designed to help parents prepare for and bring about change in the home. We **strongly** recommend that every homework assignment be completed and recorded weekly.*

Homework Assignment:

Catch your children doing something right and give them a positive stroke. Make sure you bring back your stories to share with your support group next week.

I gave my child a positive stroke when "I caught" him/her:____________________

____

____

____

____

____

____

Unit 2: Addressing Problematic Behavior

Confronting with dignity

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List five tips parents should consider before addressing problematic behavior
- Practice effective confrontation
- Discuss how emotionally charged behavior often creates family arguments

Warm Up:

Please remember that support groups are not a place for judgment, criticism or confrontation. Support groups should be a safe, comfortable and positive place to share your feelings and stories. Every member should be celebrated, encouraged and given positive strokes from the group. With that in mind:

In your support group, take a few minutes to share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *What did you "catch" your child doing right? How did you give him/her a positive stroke? What was your child's reaction?*

Before we begin Unit 2:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. After recording the member's name next to his/her assigned role, please move on to the activity.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

20

Focusing Activity 2.1

Consider the fact that many parents find it difficult to confront their children about unwanted or destructive behaviors. This is especially true for the parent of a strong-willed or out of control child. Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of reasons why parents might find it difficult to confront problematic behaviors.

1. *Example:* Child becomes physically violent.
2. *Example:* Child yells or curses at parent.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Don't worry. By the end of the series, we will have identified solutions to all of these problems.

When parents first discover their child has done something wrong, their initial response is usually to jump right in and try to control or force behavior change. Unfortunately, parents often end up screaming or arguing with their children. This only drives the family further apart on critical issues. If allowed to continue, this type of family conflict can be extremely harmful to the parent/child relationship.

Group Activity 2.2

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to discuss what the typical **parent** of a strong willed or out of control child has come to **expect** from a parent/child confrontation.

1. *Example*: *Anger*
2. *Example*: *Defensive attitude*
3. *Example*: *Will not listen*
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

Group Activity 2.2 (continued)

Now put yourself in your child's position. What do you think your **child** has typically come to **expect** from a parent/child confrontation?

1. *Example*: *To be yelled at*
2. *Example*: *To be blamed*
3. *Example*: *Not to be heard*
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

Now take a minute to compare your list of expectations with your child's list of expectations. As you can see, the lists are nearly identical. In fact, the number one complaint parents have of their teenagers is, "They will not listen." The number one complaint teens have of their parents is, "They never listen to me."

Remember, children who are listened to will be more likely to listen when WE have something important to say.

Group Activity 2:3

Take a few minutes to discuss how the typical **parent** would like to **feel** after a parent/child confrontation.

1. *Example*: *Good*
2. *Example*: *Like they had been heard*
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

Group Activity 2.3 (continued)

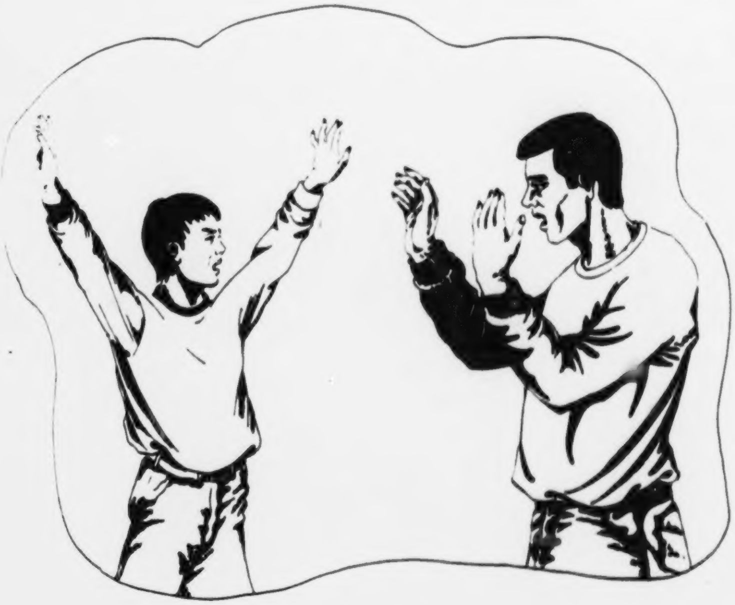
Now, again put yourself in your child's position. How do you think your **child** would like to **feel** after a parent/child confrontation?

1. *Example*: *Good*
2. *Example*: *Understood*
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________

After comparing our list with our child's, we once again see they are nearly identical. Why, if we both have the same expectations and feelings, do most of our confrontations turn into arguments? Part of the answer is because **reason** is an ineffective tool in dealing with emotionally generated behavior.

Dealing With Emotional Behavior

When parents find themselves saying, "No," to their children, there is usually a good **reason**. Children however, seldom accept a parent's first, "No," especially when it is an emotional issue for the child. With great confidence in the power of **reason,** parents usually spend a great deal of time explaining their **reasons** to their child. Then, when children fail to listen to their parent's reasoning and instead give an emotional response, an argument usually follows.



We parents frequently make the mistake of trying to convince our children that our reasoning is correct.

Activity 2.4

Working by yourself or with your spouse, think back to the last time you got into an argument with your strong-willed child. Now, take a few minutes to answer the questions below:

	Yes	No
1. Were you able to convince your child that you were right?	☐	☐
2. Was your child able to convince you that he/she was right?	☐	☐
3. Did you hear your child say, "Gee mom/dad! You're right! I never really thought of it that way. I'll stay home. I'll go tell the rest of the crowd. They won't want to go either?"	☐	☐
4. Did you hear yourself say, "Oh! Now I understand. I didn't know you felt that way. Well, your mother and I still think fourteen is a little young. But, what the heck, go ahead and marry him anyway?"	☐	☐

We are not saying that parents should not explain their reasons to their children. But, when children are emotional about an issue, parents should not expect their reasons to convince their children that Mom and Dad are right.

So, explain your reasons to your child once or twice. Then focus on the rule or demand, and the consequences if the rule is not obeyed. Depending on the circumstances, parents have the right to make new rules on the spot. We found that the older children get, the more rules parents need.

For a sixteen year old, the rules might be:

- you may not go out with anyone one to two years older than yourself; or,
- you may not marry anyone at your age; or,
- any rule you feel is necessary to fit the situation and circumstances.

"That's not **fair**!" your child will scream. Since **reason** was ineffective from the beginning of your conversation, the handy words **nevertheless** and **regardless** can be effective tools in preventing arguments.

Preparing to Address Problematic Behavior

For parents, the key to effective problem solving is preparation. Parents who take the time to properly prepare themselves will be guaranteed at least some measure of success.

Here is a check list of tips designed to help parents prepare to address problematic behavior.

☐ **Tip I: Timing (Am I calm enough to talk to my child?)**

Parents should confront a child's problematic behavior as soon as possible after the incident occurs. However, they should never confront their children in anger. Anger breeds hostility and will only serve to divide a parent and child. When a parent finds that he/she is angry because of their child's behavior, they must first address their own anger, i.e., walk around the block or take deep breaths. When the initial feelings of anger have subsided and parents are back in control of their emotions, it is time to confront.

☐ **Tip II: Develop A Plan Or An Outline (Have I organized my thoughts?)**

Parents should write down everything they want to discuss with their child. Children are very good at getting parents off track or pointing the blame elsewhere. If parents write down their thoughts, it will help to keep the confrontation focused on the unwanted behavior and help to insure that all of the key points have been discussed.

☐ **Tip III: Choose A Private, Neutral Location (Where will I talk to my child?)**

Pick a spot where both parent and child will be comfortable. If possible, they should sit close together in straight back chairs facing each other. This will help both the parent and the child listen to one another.

☐ **Tip IV: Minimize Interruptions (Will we be disturbed?)**

Parents may need to take the telephone off the hook or make sure someone else will be available to answer the phone. The rest of the family should be advised not to interrupt unless it is an emergency. Closing the door will help to keep the noise out and make the conversation easier. Make sure enough time has been set aside for the conversation.

☐ **Tip V: Prepare Yourself For The Worst (Am I ready for anything?)**

Before asking, "Is everything OK?," parents should prepare themselves for the worst. When parents effectively communicate their love, concern and support, the child in turn may confide in the parent when things go wrong. When they do, parents must not show shock or dismay. Parents who have prepared themselves for the worst (pregnancies, drugs, gangs etc.) will be in a position to help. Parents who are not prepared usually discover their children are then less likely to confide in them or that they are unable to emotionally respond when their children need them most.

Group Activity 2.5

Your 16 year old daughter has just returned home from a party and is drunk. You have wisely decided to wait until she is sober to address the problem.

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to prepare for your conversation with your daughter. Make sure your written plan takes into consideration all five tips on page 18.

1. Timing (Am I calm enough to talk to my child?)

2. Develop A Plan Or An Outline (Have I organized by thoughts?)

3. Choose A Private, Neutral Location (Where will I talk to my child?)

4. Minimize Interruptions (Will we be disturbed?)

5. Prepare Yourself For The Worst (Am I ready for anything?)

What To Expect

After the conversation has begun, parents should prepare for any of the following defensive attitudes: Anger, Denial, Blame.

Examples:

Anger *"Why are you always picking on me? Get off my back!"*

Denial *"I wasn't late."*

Blame *"It wasn't my fault. I wasn't driving."*

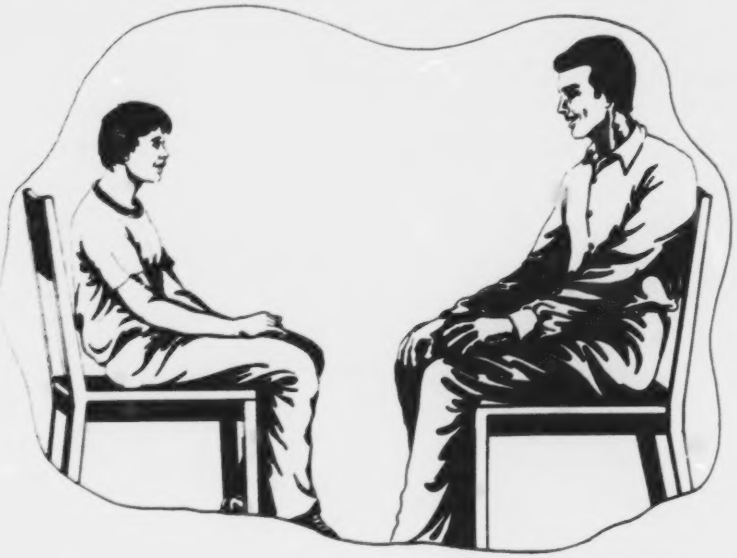
Parents should:

- remain calm and listen to their child;
- return to the original reasons for the confrontation and again express parental concerns;
- make the expectations for the child's future behavior clear. Clarify rules, if necessary;
- identify the consequences and/or provide more structure;
- end the meeting on a positive note. Example: *"I know you are more than capable; I have faith in you; I know you can do this".*

Parents should not:

- apologize for the confrontation
- judge the child
- preach or lecture
- try to scare the child

Addressing problematic behavior only **begins** the process of change. But, if parents confront their children out of love and concern, consistently apply the house rules and follow through with the consequences, they will be in a better position to effect a change in destructive behavior.



Group Activity 2.6

Choose a partner from your support group to help you role play the following scenario:

Your 14 year old son or daughter wants to go on a date with a 20 year old. You must tell your child no, but must also listen to your child. Remember to try to address his/her needs, but do not get caught up in an argument.

Take turns playing the role of the parent. For help, see page 20.

Dealing with threats of running away and suicide:

When parents begin to implement appropriate discipline for broken house rules, some children may respond by threatening to run away from home, if they do not get their way. If this occurs, parents will need to defuse the situation and must not *challenge* their child to run away.

Example:

Son/Daughter: "I hate this place! I'm running away! You'll never see me again!"

Mother/Father: "Son, you know that I cannot control you and if you really want to run away from home, I couldn't stop you. I cannot watch you 24 hours a day and I can't lock you up. But I love you very much and I know that no one in the world loves you the way I do. That is why we have established these house rules. Because we love you, we cannot stand by and watch you hurt yourself by (i.e., not going to school, using drugs, drinking, etc.) and running away from home will not help you solve the problem. You and I know it will only make matters worse."

If, after trying to defuse the situation, children continue to threaten to run away, or, seem emotionally distraught over the situation, parents should seek the advice of a mental health care professional.

Whenever a child threatens **suicide**, parents should immediately seek the advice of a mental health care professional. In addition to overt threats, other warning signs of suicide may include:

- Lowered self image
- Exaggerated view of problems that, to the child, seem impossible to overcome
- Lack of direction
- Severe reaction to loss of friend
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug/alcohol use, reckless driving, overeating, etc.
- Personality or behavior changes
- Making final arrangements, giving away prized possessions, etc.
- Previous attempts at suicide
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits

When dealing with threats of suicide, parents should always err on behalf of the child's safety. Immediate professional help should be sought. Additionally, local suicide hotlines can serve as parental resources.

Review Activity 2.7

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Children are generally driven by _____________________.
2. Parents should ______________ themselves before they address problematic behaviors with their children.
3. Parents should always be calm when they _______________ their children about problematic a behaviors.
4. Parents should develop a __________________ or an ________________ before addressing problematic behavior.
5. Parents should choose a_____________ location in the house when addressing problematic behavior.

outline **confront** **emotion** **private** **plan** **prepare**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Homework Assignment:

Refuse to argue with your child for the next week. Bring back your success stories to share with your support group.

I did not argue with my child when: ______________________________

____

____

____

____

____

Unit 3: Active Supervision, Structure and Improving School Performance

A parent's formula for success

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List the elements of active supervision
- Discuss the necessity of creating structure for children
- Implement the *homework assignment checklist*

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *How were you able to keep from arguing with your child? What was your child's response?*

Before we begin Unit 3:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. After recording the member's name next to his/her assigned role, move on to the activity.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Focusing Activity 3.1

Work alone or with your spouse and take a few minutes to develop two lists of behaviors. First, list the behaviors you would like to see your child increase. Then, list the behaviors you would like to see decreased.

Behaviors I would like to see increased are:	Behaviors I would like to see decreased are:
1. *Example:* Study time	1. *Example:* Lying
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Active Supervision

In society today, children are exposed to more drug use, sex and gang violence than they were a decade ago. Each and every day, children are faced with decisions that will impact the rest of their lives.

In times like these children require more structure. However, because of the change of women's roles and other dynamics of today's world, children are receiving less supervision and structure.

For parents, active supervision can be described by five simple words: **who, what, where, when and why.**

Who	Who is my child with? Parents should meet all their children's friends. They should also know the friend's last name, address, phone number and be on a first name basis with the child's parents.
What	What will my child be doing? Is he/she going to a dance, a show, a party or to someone's house?
Where	Where is my child going to be? Where is the theater or dance? What is the address of the party?
When	When will my child be home? Kids will often do several things in one night: go to a show; grab a bite to eat and "hang out" at Tim's house. For evenings like these, it is advisable for parents to know what time the show gets out and when the kids plan to arrive at Tim's house. Some parents ask that their children telephone them when they leave or arrive at new locations during the evening.
Why	Why should I let my child go to this party? Will it be well chaperoned? Will alcohol be served? Who else will be attending the party? How has my child done this past week? (School, homework, chores etc.)

Active supervision can fit within a busy schedule. In fact, much of the responsibility for parental knowledge can be given to the child. For example, when our children make a new friend, it should be our children's responsibility to enter their new friend's address and phone number in the family telephone book and insure that mom and dad have had an opportunity to meet the new friend. All parents need to do is ask; it should be up to the child to provide the answers.

Group Activity 3.2

Your 16 year old son or daughter has just announced that he/she will be going to a party on Friday night. With your support group, take a few minutes to discuss and write what further information you will need before allowing your child to go.

Who: ______________________________

____

____

What: ______________________________

____

____

Where: ______________________________

____

____

When: ______________________________

____

____

Why: ______________________________

____

____

Finally, once parents have obtained the answers to *who, what, where, when* and *why*, occasional spot checks should be made. Parents should occasionally check to see the party is well chaperoned, or their son/daughter is at John's house and John's parents are also home. If parents discover their children have lied to them, or are not where they said they would be, consequences should be implemented.

Some parents may see this as a trust issue and are unsure if they should check on their child's activities without reason. Remember, trust is earned.

It has been our experience children will generally lie about three things: drug or alcohol use, sex and homework. Some kids are painfully honest while others lie about everything. If you trust your children, tell them so and give them a positive stroke. But, if you do not trust them, there is usually a good reason. So when children ask, "What's the matter, don't you trust me?", tell them, "No!", and explain why. Children should also be told what they will need to do to earn back your trust.

The key word here is supervision. Despite the fact that my boss (supervisor) trusts me to do a good job, he/she occasionally checks my work to insure that everything is running smoothly. For parents, the principle is the same. An occasional check on our children's activities will help to insure their safety and help to convey our love and concern.

Creating Structure

A building or structure can be strong or weak, depending upon how the construction materials were put together. Likewise, a person can be strong or weak, depending upon how the different parts of that person's life (*family, education, friends etc.*) were put together.

Example:

If a child is well structured, his/her normal daily routine would include time for school, friends, family, homework, daily chores and free or playtime. Structure is simply the way the different parts of a whole are put together. If a child's life is well structured, he/she will be more likely to become a stronger adult.

Unfortunately, children generally do what they enjoy and sometimes go out of their way to avoid what is good for them, or what they see as work. This avoidance, however normal, can cause severe long term problems for any child.

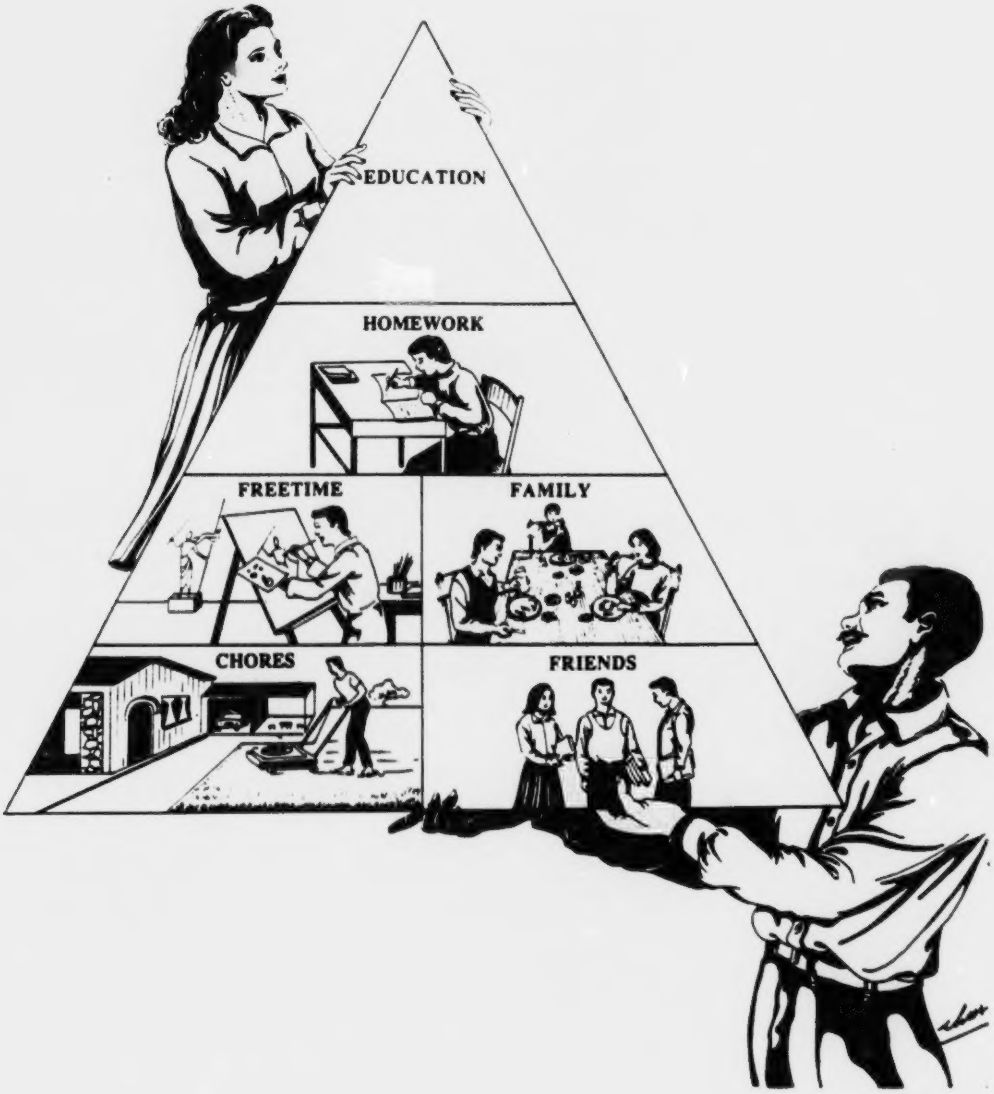
Group Activity 3.3

Try this experiment. List the daily activities of your child, separating them into two categories: the activities/things your child enjoys, and the activities you want your child to do.

A. Activities/things your child enjoys:	**B. Activities you would like your child to do:**
Example:	*Example:*
• Watch television	• Go to School
• Talk on the telephone	• Make his/her bed
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

Everyone needs to have fun or free time, and the younger the child, the more free time they will require. But, take a moment to compare your list to that of your child's. It is easy to see why it is difficult for children to successfully structure their own time. What we would like to see them do is generally not what they enjoy.

Structure is not punishment. It is simply a method of helping our children use their time to develop all their skills and become stronger, more successful adults. When children learn to balance their work efforts with the use of their free time, they develop self discipline. Until they do, parents may need to help their children structure their daily activities.



Using Structure to Improve School Performance

We consider poor school performance to be a destructive adolescent behavior because it will often send children into a tail spin from which they may not recover. Children often do poorly in school because it is not something that interests them. When grades begin to fall and school report cards are sent home, children's self esteem is usually the first casualty. With a little effort, kids can generally improve their grades, but because homework is not on "*their list*", they do not usually have enough self discipline to do what is needed on their own.

If this dangerous trend is allowed to continue, kids often feel they are in too deep to pull themselves out. At this stage, children may lose all interest in school and attendance may begin to suffer.

Group Activity 3.4

Working with your support group, brainstorm a list of problems children may face when their grades fail, or they begin ditching classes.

1. *Example:* Loss of self esteem
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________

When parents first see their child's poor report card, they usually respond out of anger and frustration. Lectures and long range restrictions of one to six months are common, but usually do not result in improved grades.

At times like these, children will often promise parents they will do better in school and the child may be sincere. However, even though a child's intentions may be good, he/she probably does not have enough self discipline to do his/her homework daily. Most children and teenagers learn to discipline themselves after parents have consistently held them accountable and withheld the *child's list* of privileges until the work or chore is completed. Although most will complain at first, teenagers need a parent to check up on them from time to time.

The single most common problem with poor school performance is incomplete or inadequate homework. If the average student does his/her daily homework and attends class regularly, chances are the student will pass with at least a C grade.

When parents ask children if they have finished their homework, children typically respond:

- They did not have any homework assigned; or,
- They did their homework in class; or,
- They left their completed homework in their locker at school.

The problem of course, is by this time there is no possible way for the parent to check with the child's teacher to verify the story. Unless parents know the homework policy, the arguments will continue and grades will not improve.

The *Homework Assignment Checklist* below is a simple tool parents can use to provide themselves with the necessary information about their child's homework. However, parents must still insure the homework is complete and must withhold the activities their child wants to do, (such as watching TV. or talking on the telephone), until the homework is complete. Parents must use both the homework assignment sheet and control their *child's list* of activities on page 29 to be successful.

Daily Homework Assignment Sheet

Student's Name:

Class/Period	**Homework Assignment**	**Teacher's Initials**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Feel free to copy assignment sheet

The Homework Assignment Sheet

This simple form is most effective when used as followed:

1. Each day the student takes one form with him/her and dates the form.
2. The student fills in the homework assignment for each class at the end of each period, **in ink.**
3. Before leaving class, the student shows the assignment sheet to the teacher who approves the homework assignment by initialing the box. (It is not the teacher's responsibility to fill out the form, only to initial the form).

If there is no homework, the student is to write "none" in the box and still obtain the teacher's initials. Some students will write "none" in the box and forge the teacher's initials. Therefore, parents will need to occasionally contact the teacher to confirm the information.

Note: After several days, one parent noticed the assignment sheet given her by her son looked strangely familiar. In fact, her fifth-grade son had been showing her the same assignment sheet and the same math homework for nearly three weeks!

Parents should collect the homework assignment sheets daily. Parents should look over the homework when children report they have finished; this will ensure the homework is complete. Children will complain at first, but will soon learn poor quality work will not get them the activities on *their list.*

"Robert, turn off the TV. and bring me your homework assignment sheet."

Developing Homework Behavior

The *Homework Assignment Checklist* is designed to be an all-or-nothing system. That is, all the activities on your *child's list* (TV., stereo, telephone, friends, etc.) are only available after his/her homework is complete and not before. If a child does not bring the *Homework Assignment Checklist* home, then he/she is not allowed anything on *his/her list* for that one evening, including leaving the house or having friends visit.

This short term (one day) consequence prevents children from feeling like they are on "death row" as with longer restrictions of a week or more. In order to keep homework from piling up on children, parents should **not** expect homework to be made up. If a child is restricted for one night for failing to bring home the assignment sheet, that day's homework is lost forever.

If a child simply refuses to cooperate, it is the loss of the activities on *his/her list* which will eventually bring him to change his mind and do the homework. Lectures, angry shouting matches and threats only **slow** the process of change.

Group Activity 3.5

Recognizing the homework assignment sheet may be the answer to your daughter's low grades, you decide to use it beginning Monday. On Monday, your daughter takes the homework assignment sheet to school, but, knowing her as you do, you suspect she may come home with some excuse or reason why she cannot give it to you.

With the large group, brainstorm and list the possible excuses your daughter may give for not completing the assignment sheet.

1. *Example*: "Oh, I left it in my locker." ____
2. ____
3. ____
4 ____
5. ____
6. ____
7. ____
8. ____
9. ____
10. ____

Now, with your support group, choose five of the above listed excuses/reasons. For each excuse, take a minute to decide the proper consequence. For help, see page 34.

Excuse/Reason	**Consequence**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Review Activity 3.6

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Active supervision can be described by five simple words: Who, __________, Where, ___________ and Why.

2. Parents should occasionally _____________ on their children to insure they are safe.

3. When parents discipline their children, they should take away ______________ on their child's list for a ______________ period of time.

4. Parents need three things to insure their child does their homework.

   a. A _____________ homework assignment sheet.
   b. Parents need to __________________ their child's homework when it is completed.
   c. Parents need to ________________ their *child's list* of activities until the homework is ______________.

short **check** **everything** **What** **control** **completed**

When **finished** **approve**

5 Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Homework Assignment:

Obtain or make a telephone book for your children's friends. Have your child enter all necessary information about their friends. (Name, address, phone number, etc.)

and

If your situation warrants, make plans to begin using the homework assignment sheet. Set a date to begin and contact all of your child's teachers etc. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

What did you discover about your child's friends or school situation?____________________

____

____

____

____

____

____

Unit 4: Drug Use: Identification, Intervention and Prevention Techniques

Combating society's adolescent drug epidemic

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Recognize physical signs of drug influence
- Recognize behavioral signs of drug influence
- Discuss possible drug use intervention strategies

Warm Up:

In your support groups, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *What did you learn about your child's friends or school situation?*

Before we begin Unit 4:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. After recording the member's name next to his/her assigned role, move on to the activity.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Focusing Activity 4.1

Working with your support group, brainstorm a list of problems parents face raising their children in today's complex society.

1. *Example:* Teen drug and alcohol use.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

As we mentioned in Active Supervision, there are three things kids will generally lie about; drug use is number one on the list. As parents, the last thing we want to believe is that *our child* would use drugs or alcohol. ***Note: in reality, there is a 70% chance our sons and daughters will use drugs or alcohol on a regular basis before graduating from high school.*** This is what makes parent identification skills so vitally important. Kids who use drugs, do not wear a sign stating, "Drug User," so parents must learn to watch for the signs and symptoms if they want to be in a position to head off serious trouble.

A parent who discovers their child is using tobacco may even be relieved the child is just smoking tobacco and is not using illegal drugs. Unfortunately, the facts are that the vast majority of children who smoke cigarettes prior to the tenth grade go on to use illicit drugs.

Other parents believe it is all right for their teenagers to drink alcoholic beverages, and some may even try to teach their children to drink responsibly at home. Most of these parents say they would rather have their children drinking booze than using drugs. What these parents fail to realize is that alcohol is a drug and more teens are addicted to alcohol than all the illegal drugs (marijuana, cocaine, PCP, etc.) combined.

Tobacco and alcohol are called "gateway drugs" simply because their use among adolescents frequently leads to other drug use. Teenage bodies are not fully developed and are very susceptible to the effects of alcohol and tobacco. *For example, with continued use of alcohol, it can take an average of up to fifteen years for adult males to become dependent on alcohol. However, with regular use, teenagers may become alcoholic in as little as nine to twelve months.*

Certainly not all teens who drink alcohol or use illegal drugs will become addicted; however, the risk is real and the potential for disaster cannot be overstated. The majority of teenagers who drop out of high school have a substance abuse problem; and for the teenage abuser who manages to stay in school, continued use of drugs or alcohol will most likely mean a shortened life or shattered dreams.

Group Activity 4.2

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to share about the youngest person you know with a drug or alcohol problem. Do not identify the person by name, but, share that person's age, sex, their drug of choice, and describe the problem/s that were created by the drug or alcohol use. List every example given in your group for comparison. The problems given may be minor, or range up to and even include the death of the person.

Example:

	Age	Sex	Drug	Problem
1.	17	M	Marijuana	Dropped out of high school
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Identifying Drug and Alcohol Use

In the beginning, children are more likely to use drugs and alcohol after school or on weekends. The first step in identification for parents is to put themselves in a position where they can observe their child. Parents who are not home, or who are asleep when their children return home, will not be in a position to observe.

When children return home, parents need to meet them face to face, watch them walk, engage them in conversation, and find out how their evening went. A hug and a kiss from mom or dad not only helps kids feel better about themselves, but can also help detect an alcoholic breath and other odors of drug or tobacco use.

Even without formal training parents can learn to recognize drug and alcohol use in their children. When under the influence of drugs or alcohol, kids will exhibit certain physical signs that will vary in degree depending on the dosage. Although there are many drugs of abuse, for purposes of identification, there are only two basic classifications: stimulants and depressants. Each group produces separate symptoms.

DEPRESSANTS	**Depressants slow down the central nervous system.** **(alcohol, "reds", tranquilizers, Quaaludes, etc.)** • Relaxed facial muscles • Red/watery eyes • Dry mouth • Slow deliberate movements • Reduced coordination/balance • Inability to concentrate • Confusion • Decreased pulse rate • Slowed reflexes • Decreased respiration (shallow breathing) • "Glassy" eyed • Blank stare • Slurred or thick speech • Constricted pupils (in some cases)
STIMULANTS	**Stimulants speed up the central nervous system.** **(cocaine, "speed", methedrine, pep pills, bennies, etc.)** • Alert (wide awake) • Nervousness • Impatience • Twitching • Talkative • Increased heart rate above 100 beats/minute • Increased respiration above 25 breaths/minute • Mild perspiration • Dry mouth • Dilated pupils

Group Activity 4.3

With your support group, review the physical signs of drug use on page 42. Decide which physical signs of depressant usage can be concealed by the child, and the method he/she might use. Make sure you can explain each group member's answer.

1. Example: *Red eyes (Visine can cover up red eyes.)*
2.
3.
4.

Now consider the physical signs of stimulant usage listed on page 42. Which of these do you think could be concealed by the child and what method might he/she use? Make sure you can explain each group member's answer.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

It is important to remember that when children have been drinking or using drugs and they know a parent will be waiting up for them when they return home, they will try to cover as many signs as they can and act sober. So, when parents see one of the physical signs of drug influence listed here, they should closely observe the child. If four or five signs are observed (especially those signs that cannot be hidden such as a resting heart rate above 100 beats per minute or slurred speech) then drug use should be suspected.

Specific signs of alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine use:

Alcohol

Physical Symptoms

- Alcoholic breath
- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Verbal/physical abuse
- Drowsiness
- Lethargy
- Apathy
- Irritability
- Lying; alibis; excuses
- Secretive behavior

Materials

- Hidden bottles or flasks
- Breath mints

Marijuana

Physical Symptoms

- Bloodshot eyes
- Uncontrolled laughing/giggling
- Moodiness
- Excessive eating habits
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Scratching
- Odor of marijuana in clothing and hair

Materials

- Cigarette papers
- Pipes of all types
- Alligator clips
- Brown or whitish seeds (kept in small containers)
- Visine or Murine

Cocaine

Physical Symptoms

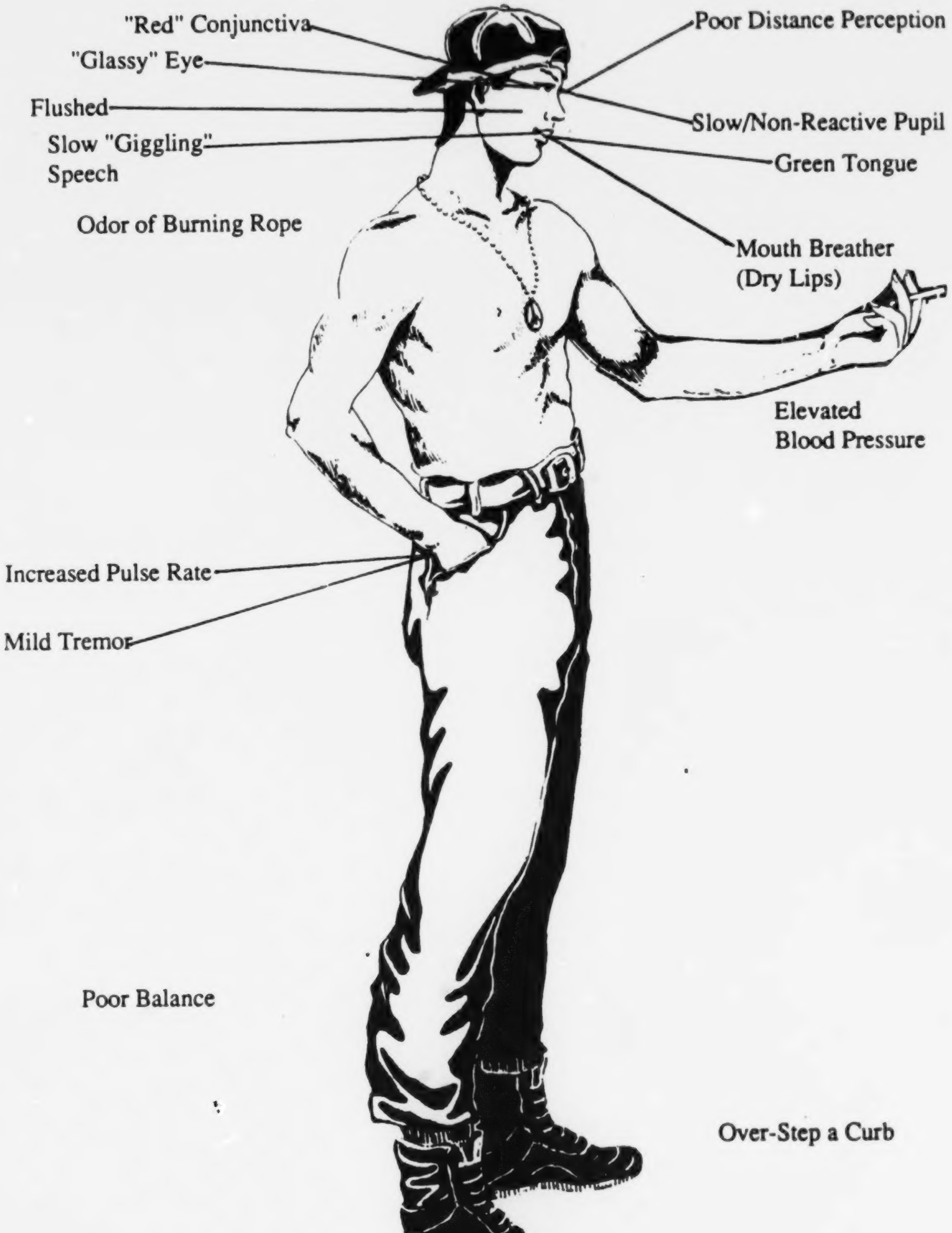
- Burnt Fingers
- Running nose
- Constant sniffling
- Enlarged pupils
- Nervousness
- Talkativeness
- Energetic/Restlessness
- Exaggerated reactions/Over enthusiasm
- Loss of appetite
- Severe depression
- Weight loss
- Impatience
- Sense of well being
- Increased heart rate above 100 beats/minute
- Increased respiration above 25 breaths/minute

Materials

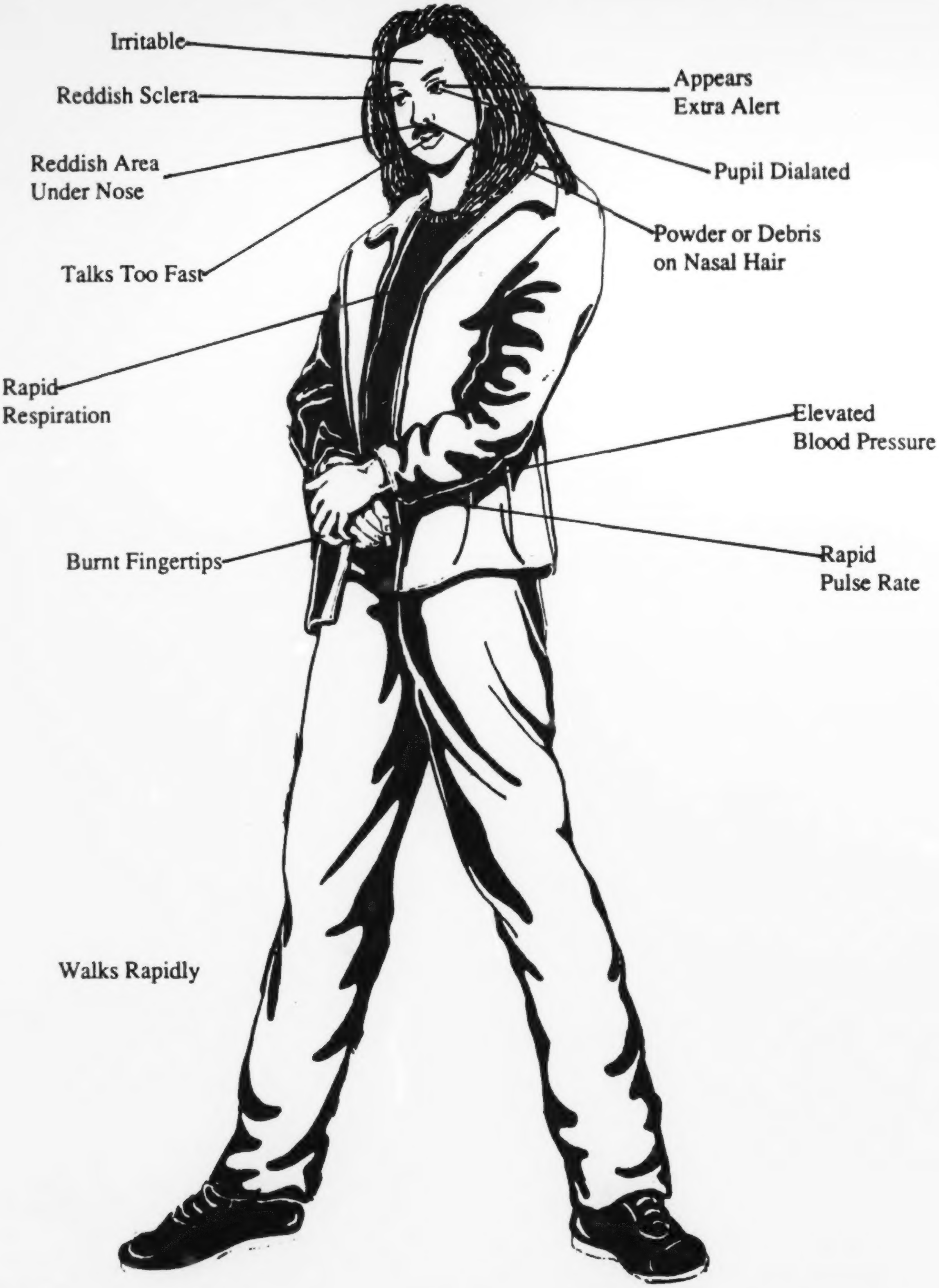
- Plastic straws
- Gold or silver tubes (straws)
- Various sized mirrors
- Rolled up currency
- Small glass vials
- Tiny gold or silver spoons
- Small glass pipes (for smoking crack)
- Nose spray

Remember: If even one of the symptoms or materials is observed, there may be cause for concern and confrontation. A bottle of Visine or bloodshot eyes may mean no more than a sleepless night. They may also mean a child is using drugs.

Person Under Marijuana Influence


"Red" Conjunctiva
"Glassy" Eye
Flushed
Slow "Giggling" Speech
Odor of Burning Rope
Poor Distance Perception
Slow/Non-Reactive Pupil
Green Tongue
Mouth Breather (Dry Lips)
Elevated Blood Pressure
Increased Pulse Rate
Mild Tremor
Poor Balance
Over-Step a Curb

Person Under Cocaine Influence


Irritable
Reddish Sclera
Reddish Area Under Nose
Talks Too Fast
Rapid Respiration
Burnt Fingertips
Walks Rapidly
Appears Extra Alert
Pupil Dialated
Powder or Debris on Nasal Hair
Elevated Blood Pressure
Rapid Pulse Rate

Continued drug use will also cause certain behavioral changes in adolescents.

Group Activity 4.4

Review the behavioral changes listed below. Working with you support group, rate each of the changes listed on a *parental worry scale* of 1 to 3 (3 being the worst). Record your answers in the boxes.

- Time Distortion:
  - ☐ Sleeping in late
  - ☐ Difficulty in waking up
  - ☐ Late for appointments
- Changes in personal hygiene:
  - ☐ Dirty clothes
  - ☐ Dirt under fingernails
  - ☐ No make-up
  - ☐ Less attention to appearance
- ☐ Lack of motivation
- ☐ A switch from good to poor work habits
- ☐ Sudden depression or happiness
- ☐ Sudden quietness or withdrawn
- ☐ Less interaction with family/home activities
- ☐ Sudden outbursts of anger
- ☐ Constant or severe depression
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Inability to concentrate
- ☐ Increased moodiness
- ☐ Clothing glorifying drug, alcohol or tobacco use
- ☐ Frequent mistakes
- ☐ Change of friends
- ☐ Drop in grades
- ☐ Circles under eyes
- ☐ Acne
- ☐ Abnormally pale complexion
- ☐ Isolation
- ☐ Weight loss
- ☐ Lying; alibis; excuses
- ☐ Constant cold or sinus problems.

Parents should remember adolescents normally experience many of these changes. A bottle of Visine or bloodshot eyes may mean no more than a sleepless night. But, they may also be signs of more serious problems. In any event, when behavioral change is noted, a direct and loving conversation with your child is definitely in order.

Many parents find drug use to be the most difficult subject on which to confront their children. Issues of parent/child trust coupled with the fear of being wrong, keeps many parents from direct confrontation. Recognizing how difficult this will be for many, parents must realize that drug addiction is a disease that for many, will end in death. If circumstances have led a parent to suspect their child is using drugs, that parent must not fail to confront their child.

When parents finally do confront their child, the most common response of children is to deny they are using drugs and raise the issue of parental trust. (Most children secretly hope that by raising this issue of trust, the parents will question their reasoning and reconsider.) If this occurs, parents will need to reflect on the original reason for confrontation and must learn to trust their own instincts. Usually, if the parents had a good reason to confront their child, they have good reason to persist in their questioning.

Drug Use Intervention Techniques

Group Activity 4.5

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of reasons why children use drugs.

1. *Example:* To escape from their problems
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Drug Testing

Parents need to face the fact that when children use drugs, they risk everything from their immediate health to life itself. We recognize drug testing is an extremely sensitive issue and is not the solution for every situation. However, because of the growing need, many hospitals and clinics will now complete drug scans at the request of the parent or family doctor. We recommend parents employ drug testing in the following situations:

1. When a parent feels **strongly** their child is using drugs, but the child denies that he/she is using drugs.
2. When the parent knows their child has used drugs in the past and needs a tool to help the child remain drug free.

In both these cases, the parent has already lost some faith or trust in their child. At this point, the health, safety and welfare of the child must be the parent's first concern. These situations should not be left to chance.

Because we love our children, we don't want to believe that **our** son or daughter would use drugs or alcohol. This normal parental denial usually allows a child's drug or alcohol use to go unnoticed by their parents for long periods of time.

When a parent first learns a child is using drugs, the first thing the parent will need to determine is how long the child has been using and if the child is addicted. For this, parents will need to contact a drug and alcohol counselor. Even when parents have limited funds and no insurance, a good drug and alcohol counselor or mental health care professional will be able to offer valuable referrals to self-help support groups and assistance for the entire family, making the task ahead far more manageable.

Many parents have successfully intervened in their child's drug or alcohol use by carefully following the **Six Step Action Plan** outlined below.

Step 1 Tell your child how you feel

"I love you more than you can possibly understand. Because I love you, I will do anything I have to do to keep you from destroying yourself with drugs and alcohol."

Step 2 Establish the rule

"You may not use drugs or alcohol. If you choose to break this rule the consequences will be severe."

Step 3 Active Supervision

Make it more difficult for your child to use drugs by closely supervising his/her activities. Check on your child as often as required. Stop by parties, go over to their friend's house and show up unexpectedly to insure they are sober. If necessary, search their room and clothing. Always insure that you are home and awake when they return home. (Employ Active Supervision, see pages 26/27).

Step 4 Consequences

Every time your child ignores the rule and uses drugs or alcohol, consequences should be implemented.

Consequences for drug and alcohol use will normally involve the removal of free time and restricting the child's activities at home (grounding). There are two general rules for disciplining adolescents:

a) It is better to take away everything on a *child's list* (TV, stereo, telephone, friends, etc. See page 29) for a short period of time, than it is to take away one or two things for long periods.

b) Shorter restrictions are more effective in changing behavior than longer restrictions (one day for minor infractions, up to no more than two weeks for serious violations such as drug and alcohol use). Longer periods of restriction in most cases make the adolescent feel as if they are on **death row**. Many teens rebel, thinking that they have nothing more to lose.

Note: *In the beginning, parents should keep the restrictions short, three days over a weekend to one week, according to the age of the child. With drug and alcohol use, change will be slow and will depend upon the consistency with which the house rules are enforced coupled with the severity of the drug or alcohol problem.*

Step 5 Consistency/Follow Through

Parents must follow through with consequences **every time** children use drugs or alcohol. Parents must remember to always follow through with the entire action plan. If the original restriction was set at one week, parents must not give in to their children by shortening the restriction and letting the child off early.

Step 6 What else should I do to help insure success?

a) *Don't support your child's drug or alcohol use.* Without realizing it, parents sometimes "enable" their children to use drugs. For example, a mother with a 13 year old son, addicted to crack cocaine, was actually supporting her son's habit. Her son would stay away from home 3 to 5 days at a time, dealing and using crack cocaine. When his mother was gone he would return home to take a shower, change clothes and eat before leaving again. This mother enabled her son to continue his drug use by leaving a window unlocked for him, washing his clothes, and preparing his meals and placing them in the refrigerator. In this case, the child had no reason to stop using. He was doing what he wanted and even though his mother said, "No," her actions said, "It's OK to continue."

b) *Model what you want your children to do.* Set a good example by not drinking daily or to excess.

c) *Remove all alcohol/drugs from the house.*

d) *Give your child positive strokes daily.*

Once again, we understand many parents will find it difficult to use some of the intervention techniques recommended. However, because drug addiction is a disease that for many will end in death, the health, safety and welfare of the child must be a parent's first concern. When drug use is suspected, nothing should be left to chance.

Group Activity 4.6

Your sixteen year old son just returned home. He is late, one half hour past his curfew, and it is very obvious he has been drinking beer. To your knowledge, this is the first time he has ever used alcohol.

Prepare yourself for your conversation by carefully reviewing the check list on page 18. Working with your support group, answer the following questions.

1. When should you confront your son about the situation? (For help see page 19)

   ____

2. Why should you develop a six step action plan?

   ____

   ____

   What questions will you need to ask your son?

   A. *Example:* Where were you drinking?

   B.______________________________

   C.______________________________

   D.______________________________

   E.______________________________

   F.______________________________

   What consequences should be implemented?
   (For help, review #4 on page 49)

   ____

   ____

3. Where will you talk to your child?

   ____

4. How will you minimize interruptions?

   ____

5. How will you prepare yourself for the worst?

   ____

   ____

When parents have prepared themselves to confront the problem of drug or alcohol use and carefully set into motion the **Six Step Action Plan** outlined in this unit, they will be well on their way to intervening in their child's substance abuse problem. Still, in some cases, parents will be fighting not only something the child wants to do, but also something the child is compelled to do. The child may well want to stop using drugs and yet not be able to stop himself.

Measure success in small steps. Even if a child drinks one or two fewer beers because they know a parent will be waiting up for them when they return home, it means the intervention process has begun. Because this change will be difficult, parents will need to find support. Family support groups, recommended by a drug counselor or mental health care professional, may be crucial in winning the war.

Review Activity 4.7

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Parents should always be ________________________ when their children return home in the evening.
2. If children use drugs or alcohol and they know their parents will be waiting for them when they return home, the children may try to _____________ _______ the physical signs of drug use.
3. Consequences should be implemented ________ ________ a child drinks alcohol or uses drugs.
4. When parents discipline their children, they should take away ___________________ on their child's list for a ______________ period of time.
5. When children have used drugs or alcohol in the past, parents should occasionally do __________ ______________ on their children when they are at a friend's house or at a party to insure they are sober.

every time **cover up** **checks** **short**
awake **spot** **everything**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this Unit?

____

Homework Assignment:

Which of the three situations listed below do you find yourself in?

1. You do not **think** your child is using drugs.
2. You **suspect** your child may be using drugs or drinking.
3. You **know** your child is using drugs and/or drinking.

Carefully review Units 2 and 4. Outline what you want to say. Have a conversation with your child about drug/alcohol use. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

How was your conversation accepted by you child?

____

____

____

Did you learn anything from your child regarding his/her exposure to drug and alcohol use?

____

____

____

5-

Unit 5: Youth Gangs: Identification, Intervention and Prevention Strategies

The importance of adolescent associations

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Identify gang dress
- Discuss parenting strategies to prevent gang involvement
- List possible parenting strategies to intervene in gang involvement

Warm Up:

In your support groups, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Describe how your conversation regarding drug use was accepted by your child. Did you learn anything from your child regarding his/her exposure to drug and alcohol use?*

Before we begin Unit 5:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. After recording the member's name next to his/her assigned role, move on to the activity.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Focusing Activity 5.1

STEP 1 Take a few minutes to review the lists of behaviors you wrote at the beginning of Unit 3, on page 26.

STEP 2 Now, working alone or with your spouse, add any new behaviors you have noticed to those lists.

STEP 3 Finally, prioritize both lists below, putting the most critical behaviors first and the least critical behaviors last.

Behaviors I would like to see increased are:	Behaviors I would like to see decreased are:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

With an estimated 1,500 street gangs and 150,000 identified gang members in the County of Los Angeles, it is not surprising to learn that there were over 1,000 gang related deaths in 1992. Despite the increasing death toll, gang membership throughout the entire country is on the rise and the violence continues.

Why do kids choose gangs?

If gang membership means serious exposure to death, why then do our children continue to join gangs? The answer is simple. Children usually get something out of gang membership that makes them feel better.

Some of the reasons a child may join a gang are:

Sense of Family: Gang membership can satisfy a child's need to belong, to be a part of something.

Self Esteem: Some gang members feel they are finally being recognized by others. Children in gangs are sometimes made to feel important, powerful and better about themselves.

Protection: Some children may join the local gang for protection from rival gangs, or for protection from their own neighborhood gang. Kids are sometimes threatened with physical harm, unless they join the local gang.

Poverty: If the local gang is dealing drugs or involved in some other profitable criminal activity, some kids will join just for the money.

Excitement: Gang membership definitely offers excitement. This excitement makes the local gang irresistible to some children.

Family Tradition: For some families, membership in the local gang has been a way of life for several generations. Some children may feel they have no other choice, but to join the gang.

When parents are aware of the reasons **why** children are drawn to gangs, they put themselves in a better position to prevent, or, to intervene with their own child's gang involvement.

What can parents do to prevent gang involvement?

Group Activity 5.2

With your support group, take a few minutes to list strategies parents can use to help combat the reasons why children may want to join gangs:

1. No sense of family
2. Lack of self esteem
3. Fear of gangs (kids seeking protection)
4. Poverty
5. Boredom
6. Family tradition

Compare your group's answers with these possible strategies:

- **No sense of family**
  Lots of love and affection daily
  Involve kids in important family discussions and hold family meetings
  Tell them about the importance of family unity and their own family history
  Consistently eat meals together as a family
  Involve them in family chores/work

- **Lack of self esteem**
  Lots of love and affection
  Praise them when they do well or try
  Tell them how important they are
  Help them succeed in school

- **Fear of gangs (kids seeking protection)**
  Walk them to school
  Don't let them "hang out"
  Actively supervise

- **No money**
  Teach them a good work ethic
  Teach them about right and wrong/morals
  Insist they work; help them to find a part-time job to earn their own money
  Insist they stay in school to get a better job

- **Boredom**
  Involve them in outside activities/sports/clubs, work, volunteering, etc.
  Part time work
  House chores
  School/Homework

- **Family tradition**
  Tell the child the tradition of gang membership is wrong
  Tell the child gangs/gang violence has changed. It is far more violent now
  Create new rule/tradition; no gang membership in family
  Have older sibling/gang member intervene if possible

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How can parents recognize gang/Occult involvement?

For parents, the first step to effective intervention is identification. Gang members can usually be identified by their dress and behavior.

White Separatist/Skin Head Gangs

Short hair cuts or shaved heads
Earrings
Pierced nose
Leather coats
Levi's or army style pants
Leather boots
Knives worn openly in sheaths
Army style coats

Black Gangs

Bloods (Red)	**Crips (Blue or Black)**
Red baseball hats	*Blue/black baseball hats*
White T-shirts	*White T-shirts*
Baggy, Levi's or khaki pants	*Baggy Levi's*
Red sweat shirts	*Blue sweat shirts*
Red sweat pants	*Blue sweat pants*
Red tennis shoes	*Blue/black tennis shoes*
Red shoe laces	*Blue shoe laces*
Red handkerchiefs	*LA. Raiders/Kings clothing*
Red jackets/hats	*BK. (British Knights) tennis shoes*

Hispanic Gangs

Black baseball hats (LA.. Raiders/Kings)
Baggy Levi's or khaki pants
Baggy Levi's or khaki shorts
Knee high socks
Knee length baggy shorts
White tennis shoes with graffiti
Tattoos on forearm, stomach, back or neck
Handkerchiefs worn on a belt or outside of a pocket
Black tennis shoes

Taggers

Military fatigue pants with deep pockets
Extremely long belts

In addition to sudden changes in dress, parents should also look for:

- Graffiti on school supplies
- Change of friends
- Drop in grades/truancy
- Staying out late

Perhaps because of a growing adolescent obsession with death and violence, some children find the Occult (Satanism) attractive. Some street gang members have also become active in Devil worship because it fits their violent life style. Whatever the reason, Occult membership is a self destructive and frightening behavior that continues to grow in popularity among adolescents.

Like street gangs, Occult members can often be identified by dress, tattoos, graffiti and other articles.

Occult Clothing and Articles

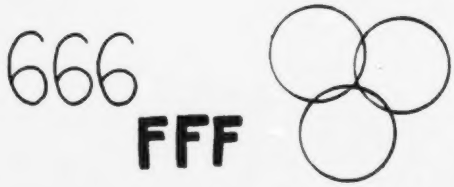
- *All black clothing, white or red accessories*
- *Black boots/tennis shoes*
- *Black gloves with fingers cut out*
- *Tattoos of Satanic symbols*
- *Blackened nail on little or middle finger of left hand*
- *"Black Notebook" (or) "Book of Shadows" containing rituals, symbols or meditations on violent death*
- *Black satin or leather jackets/pants*
- *Spikes/studs on clothing*
- *Silver jewelry with Satanic symbols*
- *Posters of satanic/heavy metal music groups*

Occult Music, Black Metal/Heavy Metal Groups

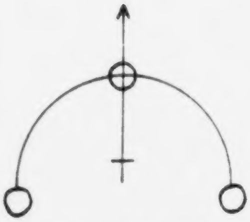
- *AC/DC*
- *Alice and Chains*
- *Anthrax*
- *Assault*
- *Bad Religion*
- *Beastie Boys*
- *Black Sabbath*
- *Body Count*
- *Corrosion of Conformity*
- *Danzig*
- *Dio (Ronnie Dio)*
- *Fishbone*
- *Green Jelly*
- *Guns and Roses*
- *Helmet*
- *Iron Maiden*
- *Judas Priest*
- *Keri Doll*
- *KISS*
- *Man O'War*
- *Mega Death*
- *Mentors*
- *Merciful Fate*
- *Metallica*
- *Motley Crue*
- *Motorhead*
- *Obituary*
- *Opiate*
- *Overkill*
- *Ozzy Osbourne*
- *Pantera*
- *Ruthless*
- *Sepultura*
- *Slayer*
- *Testament*
- *The Almighty*
- *Twisted Sister*
- *Venom*
- *Victim*
- *WASP*
- *White Zombie*

In addition to the above, parents should closely monitor the lyrics of **all** RAP music.

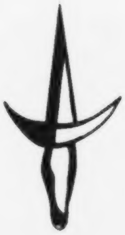
Occult/Satanic Symbols



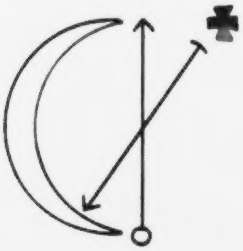
Mark of the Beast/Devil. Letter "F" is the sixth letter of the alphabet.



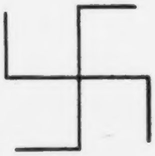
Sexual Ritual



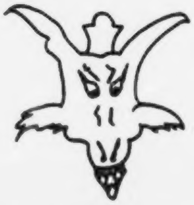
Sword of power represents aggression. Used in rituals.



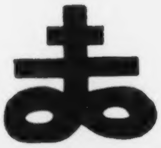
Blood ritual, human and animal sacrifice.



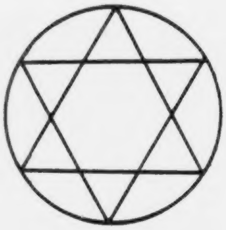
Swastika or twisted cross. Used by witches/wizards.



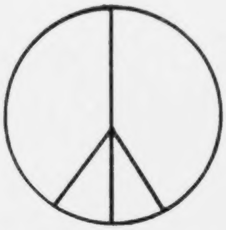
Goats head. Represents Satan and power of darkness.



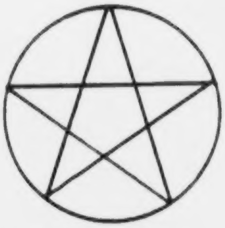
Church of Satan



The hexagram or seal of Solomon.

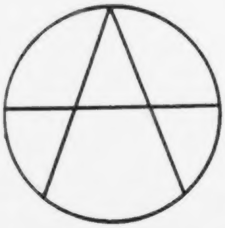


Fallen cross. Upside down with broken arms.

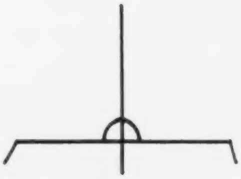


The pentagram represents witchcraft.

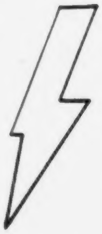
Occult/Satanic Symbols



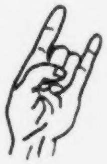
Anarchy. Represents abolition of all law.



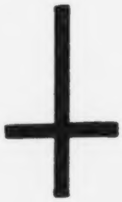
Inverted cross of Satanic justice.



Lightening Bolt. Represents "S" for Satan or Stoners.



Horns of the Devil. Two fingers up. Denial of the Trinity, 3 fingers down.



Inverted cross

AC/DC	Anti-Christ/Devil's Children
Letter "C"	Uses "K" for Kryst
'C'RAZ¥	Horns and tail added
FTW	F _ _ _ the world
Natas	Satan Written Backwards
ΘZZ¥	OZZY OSBOURNE. Tail of Devil on "O" and "Y"
SOS	Sons of Satan
ZΘSΘ	Demon/three-headed dog

66

What can parents do about gang/Occult involvement?

In order to make identification easier, parents should learn as much as possible about the gangs in their own neighborhood. Find out what "territory" local gangs claim for themselves and the location of their favorite hangouts. Local police and school authorities should be able to supply much of the information a parent will need.

The Intervention Process

In our experience, we have never met a gang or Occult member who did not also use drugs or alcohol. For this reason, parents may find gang membership to be one of the most difficult behaviors to change. However, even with 17 or 18 year old gang members, if a parent simply refuses to give up, success is possible.

We recently spoke to one mother who was raising five children by herself in South Central Los Angeles. Like most single parents, she worked hard to support her family and insisted that all her children graduate high school. Despite her efforts, one of her sons was fifteen years old before she realized that for the past two years he had been deeply involved with the local gang. Although her son was using drugs and drinking, she refused to give up and was eventually successful in pulling him out of the gang.

Many parents have used the **Six Step Action Plan** outlined below to help pull their children from gang involvement.

STEP 1 **Tell Your Child How You Feel** "Being a gang member can only bring death or destruction and I love you too much to stand by and watch you destroy your life."

STEP 2 **Establish the Rule** "You may not be in a gang/occult or hang around with any gang/occult members. If you choose to break this rule, the consequences will be severe."

STEP 3 **Active Supervision**

Parents should seek to know everything about their children's activities; ask:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

When children have involved themselves with gangs/Occult, parents should check on their children at least once a week. Parents should stop by parties and locate their children when they are out to insure they are not with gang members, or wearing gang clothing.

STEP 4 Consequences

Every time your child ignores the rules by wearing gang/occult clothing or associating with gang/occult members, consequences should be implemented.

Parents should remove everything on their *child's list,* including free time, for a period of one weekend to one week. When children becomes tired of staying home on weekends, they will begin to consider giving up their gang/Occult involvement.

STEP 5 Consistency/Follow Through

Parents must be consistent. Every time children are seen with gang/Occult members or wearing gang/Occult clothing, consequences should be implemented. Parents must remember to always follow through with the **entire** action plan.

STEP 6 What Else Should I Do to Help Insure Success?

a) *Destroy All Gang/Occult Clothing and Articles.* A mother returned home from work to find one of her sons dressed in gang clothing. She pulled him into the rear yard, removed all his clothes, threw them into a trash can and set them on fire.

> *Note: We are not recommending that parents set fire to gang clothing. However, by destroying the clothes, this mother sent a very strong message to her son. She was not going to tolerate his gang involvement.*

When children wear gang clothing, they are targeting themselves for gang violence. Therefore, we recommend that parents cut up the clothing or make it unusable.

After parents make a strong statement about gang clothing, children will often borrow clothing from other gang members. If a child comes home with another member's clothing, parents should destroy it also. If every item of gang clothing a parent sees is destroyed, no one will be willing to loan the child more.

In some cases, children may complain that they will be beaten up by other gang members if the borrowed clothes are destroyed. If this occurs, parents may want to consider **personally** returning the clothing to the parent of the owner and warning that in the future, gang articles will be destroyed.

Finally, children often hide their gang/Occult clothes, wear them only at school and take them off before they get home. For this reason, parents should make unannounced visits to their child's school to discover what their child is wearing and with whom they are associating.

b) *Never announce to gang members that your son or daughter is leaving the gang.* For many gangs, membership is for life. In some cases, when children have tried to leave the gang, they have been threatened with physical harm. Therefore, children should quietly stop hanging out with gang members, drawing as little attention to themselves as possible.

c) *Catch your children doing something right and give them a positive stroke daily.*

Group Activity 5.3

Unannounced, you have just arrived at your 14 year old son's school to give him a ride home. You find him wearing gang clothing. This is the second time you have found your son dressed in gang attire. The first time you cut up the clothes.

With your support group, take a few minutes to decide upon a course of action. Make sure you consider all **Six Steps** of an effective **Action Plan**. For help, review pages 63 and 64.

STEP 1 Tell your child how you feel.

STEP 2 Reestablish the rule.

STEP 3 Active Supervision

STEP 4 Consequences

STEP 5 Consistency/Follow Through

STEP 6 What else should I do to help insure success?

How should parents deal with out of control children?

We recognize that in many cases, older children will simply ignore their parents and walk out of the house. In cases like these, parents will need to become more assertive, but should not give up hope of influencing their child. The following true stories illustrate this concept:

Example #1

When her son refused to come home after school, one mother went to all the gang's favorite hangouts until she located her son with other gang members in the park. When he refused to come home with her, she sat down with the gang and told him she would wait until he was ready to come home. When the gang got up to walk away, she stayed with them delivering motherly advice until the gang split up and went home.

This mother was able to recruit two other parents of gang members to help her. The three showed up in parks, at gang houses and at parties until they were successful in pulling their children out of the gang.

Example #2

Another parent successfully used food to get his son back to school and home at a reasonable hour. This father removed all the food from the house with the exception of breakfast for the following morning.

The father made breakfast at 6:00 AM. for the family, but because his son had been out until 2:00 AM. the night before, he did not get out of bed to eat. When the son woke up at noon and could find nothing in the house to eat, he called his father at work. The father told his son the vice principal was holding his lunch money for him, but the son would have to go to school if he wanted to eat. The parents also scheduled dinner for 8:00 PM. that evening, knowing their son usually left the house by 6:00 PM.

Using this technique, this father was able to draw his son closer to his family and had him back in school within a couple of weeks.

When children become involved in destructive behaviors, parents should use everything they can to motivate their children to change. If the children are dependent upon their parents for basic support, parents can significantly influence their child's behavior.

The Extended List

Items which parents regularly supply that children usually take for granted include:

- Hair spray
- Make-up
- Toiletries
- Favorite clothes
- Junk food
- Bedroom doors and furniture

When parents are trying to save their children from destructive behaviors, none of the items on the extended list should be considered sacred.

Group Activity 5.4

You have just observed your son wearing gang clothing and hanging around with gang members for the second time.

You tell him he is restricted for the next three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. He tells you, "You can't control me," and walks out of the front door. You call to him, but he ignores you and continues walking down the street.

With your support group, take a few minutes to decide upon a course of action. What should you do? Make sure you consider using **The Extended List** on page 66.

____

____

____

____

____

Our Children's Choice of Friends

Parents can help their children choose positive relationships by helping children realize the qualities of a good friend or person. Personal values such as honesty, loyalty and integrity should be explained and discussed with adolescent children.

For all practical purposes, children should be allowed the opportunity to choose their friends. Even though we may not fully approve of our child's choice of friends, unless there is some identifiable problem, it may not be appropriate for parents to intervene.

Parental intervention is appropriate whenever a parent has evidence of unhealthful or destructive behavior, such as gang involvement or drug usage. Depending on the circumstances, parents may first want to issue a warning.

Example: Your son and his friend are caught smoking a regular cigarette or chewing tobacco at school. In addition to a two-day restriction for breaking the house rule about using tobacco, dad may want to address the friendship with **both** of the children.

Dad/Mom: "Good friends help to keep their friends out of trouble. If you enjoy each other's company and you want your friendship to continue, then you will help keep each other from using tobacco. If another incident occurs, I may have no other choice but to end your association with each other."

In other situations, immediate intervention will be necessary. One example would be gang membership. If parents discover their daughter's friend is a gang member, immediate action would be required.

Example:

Dad/Mom: "I have just discovered that your friend John is a gang member. Our family has discussed how dangerous gang activity can be, and therefore established our house rule about associating with gang members. John is no longer welcome around this house and your association with him will end immediately."

Daughter: "You can't pick my friends for me!"

Dad/Mom: "No I cannot. But, every time I see you with John, you will be restricted for one week."

Parents should realize that some peer associations are like addictions and therefore expect children to complain about, or ignore the rule. Nevertheless, parents should not try to persuade their children that the parent's actions are justified. Instead, parents should simply state the reason for their decision once. Parents should then repeat that while they cannot control the child's actions they can control the *child's list* of things and will do so if the rule is not obeyed. (To review the intervention process in these types of situations refer to pages 63 and 64.)

When examining their children's choice of friends, parents should also consider dating relationships. The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is especially true for teens and dating. Specific house rules regarding dating situations can help parents minimize arguments and convey personal morals and family values to their children.

Group Activity 5.5

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of dating rules for your children. Include rules that establish a minimum dating age for your child and the acceptable dating age for your child's boyfriend or girlfriend.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

In closing, we were recently confronted by the mother of a 21 year old daughter. The mother complained that her daughter had not worked since high school, was using drugs and dating a married man.

We recommended that the mother take away all her daughter's make-up and all but one set of clothes, suitable for job hunting. The daughter could earn back the use of her make-up by turning in two job applications per day. And for every three narcotics anonymous meetings she attended, she would receive one set of clothes.

When her mother announced the new plan, the daughter screamed and refused to cooperate. But it took only one day without make-up to convince the daughter that it was time to look for a job.

Many parents give up when their daughter or son approaches eighteen years of age, thinking it is already too late to influence their child. The truth is, as long as the child is dependent upon a parent for basic support, parents still have an opportunity to intervene in destructive behaviors and relationships.

Review Activity 5.6

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Children often join street gangs because gangs are ________________ and can satisfy a child's need to feel ______________.
2. When parents discipline their children, they should take away _____________ on their child's list for a _______________ period of time.
3. A __________ **Step Action Plan** can be effective in pulling children out of gang involvement.
4. When dealing with out of control children, parents may want to control the __________ list of items such as bedroom doors or makeup.
5. Regarding our children's choice of friends, it is appropriate for parents to intervene whenever a parent has evidence of ________________ or ___________________ behavior, such as drug use or early sexual involvement.

six **exciting** **extended** **important**
destructive **everything** **unhealthy** **short**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Homework Assignment:

1. Take time to examine all of your child's clothing, music, posters, reading material, and watch one hour of MTV.
2. Decide which of these items you can live with, and which of them are harmful to your child.
3. Make a list of **every** item you feel is harmful to your child. Bring back your list to share with your support group.

Things that are harmful to my children include:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.

Unit 6: Developing Personal Action Plans

What I need to do

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Develop action plans for behavioral change
- Discuss the benefit of joining a parent support group

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your list of items that you feel are potentially harmful to your child. (See page 70)

Before we begin Unit 6:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. After recording the member's name next to his/her assigned role, move on to the activity.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Focusing Activity 6.1

Review your *child's list* of activities and things they enjoy doing on page 29. If you can think of any additional activities or things your child enjoys, add them to your *child's list* now.

Concept Review:

Group Activity 6.2

With your support group, discuss and record *what the group feels* are the three most important concepts learned from Unit 1. For help, see review activity 1.10, on page 10.

1.
2.
3.

Group Activity 6.3

With your support group, discuss and record *what the group feels* are the three most important concepts leaned from Unit 2. For help, see review activity 2.7, on page 22.

1.
2.
3.

Group Activity 6.4

With your support group, discuss and record *what the group feels* are the three most important concepts learned from Unit 3. For help, see review activity 3.6, on page 36.

1.
2.
3.

Group Activity 6.5

With your support group, discuss and record *what the group feels* are the three most important concepts learned from Unit 4. For help, see review activity 4.7, on page 52.

1.
2.
3.

Group Activity 6.6

With your support group, discuss and record *what the group feels* are the three most important concepts learned from Unit 5. For help, see review activity 5.6, on page 69.

1.
2.
3.

After parents have identified a problematic behavior and made the commitment to change the behavior a **Six Step Action Plan** should be completed. Parents who try to change an unwanted adolescent behavior without a clear plan will definitely find the task more difficult.

Group Activity 6.7

Think back to the last time you discussed an unwanted behavior with your strong-willed child. With your support group discuss how you felt after your discussion and if your son or daughter changed his/her behavior as a result of your discussion.

How did I feel? (Parent)	Did the behavior change? (Check only ONE)
1. ______________________	☐ YES
2. ______________________	☐ NO
3. ______________________	☐ Partially

Effective Action Plans

An effective action plan can help parents feel better about their relationship with their children and improve a parent's ability to influence adolescent behavior. Action plans can be developed for *any* unwanted adolescent behavior if parents carefully follow the six steps outlined below.

1. **Tell your child how you feel.**

   In this opening statement to their child, parents should:

   a) State how much the parent loves the child;

   b) Tell the child why the parent is concerned about the behavior;

   c) Ask the child why the behavior is occurring.

   d) Ask the child if everything is okay.

   e) Listen to your child's responses.

2. **Establish the rule.**

   Parents should clearly state or restate the house rule regarding the behavior.

3. **Actively supervise the child's daily activities.**

   After establishing the rule parents will need to know the who, what, when, where and why of their child's daily activities. Spot checks should also be made to insure the house rules are being followed. (Review pages 26 and 27)

4. **Consequences**

   Parents should decide what the consequences will be if the rule is broken. Consequences do not have to be revealed to the child in advance. When implementing consequences parents should remember:

   a) It is better to take away everything on a *child's list* (TV., stereo, telephone, friends, etc.) for a short period of time, than it is to take away one or two things for long periods. (See page 29)

   b) Shorter restrictions are more effective in changing behavior than longer restrictions (one day for minor infractions, up to no more than two weeks for extremely serious violations such as drug use and gang involvement). Longer periods of restriction in most cases make children feel as if they are on **death row**. When placed on long restrictions, many teens rebel, thinking that they have nothing more to lose.

5. **Consistency/Follow-Through**

   Every time the rule is broken, consequences should be implemented. Parents must remember to always follow-through with the **entire** action plan.

6. **What else should I do to help insure success?**

   In this final step, parents should examine the problem and decide if there is anything else they can do to help their child stay on the right track. Parents should give their children positive strokes daily.

Example:

If a parent discovered that his/her child had just begun drinking alcohol or using drugs, the following action plan would be effective.

STEP 1 Tell your child how you feel.

"I love you more than you can possibly understand, which is why your drinking alcohol concerns me so much. I'm afraid you will be seriously injured or develop a drinking problem. Tell me, why do you find it necessary to drink alcohol?" "Is everything okay?"
(Review page 74)

STEP 2 Establish the rule.

"I understand that many of your friends are drinking alcohol and you do not consider drinking alcohol to be a big deal. Nevertheless, it is against the law for you to drink and your drinking is against the rules of this house. You are to stop drinking alcohol and must never get into a car with someone else who has been drinking. If you break this rule, the consequences will be **severe**!"

STEP 3 Actively supervise the child's daily activities.

1. I will need to know the who, what, when, where and why regarding my child's daily activities.
2. I will conduct one spot check on my child per week.
3. I will make sure I'm awake when my child returns home in the evening to insure he/she is okay and is sober.

STEP 4 Consequences

If my child ignores the rule and drinks alcohol, I **will** restrict him/her by taking away everything on *his/her list* for one week. (7 days)

STEP 5 Consistency/Follow-Through

I will make sure that I follow through with the consequences **every time** my child drinks alcohol. I will also follow through with the restriction for the entire week.

STEP 6 What else should I do to help insure success?

1. I will remove all alcohol from my house.
2. I will set a good example for my child by not drinking daily or in excess.
3. I will spot check some of the future parties he/she attends.
4. I will catch my child doing something right and give him/her a positive stroke daily.

Group Activity 6.8

Although she leaves on time for school every morning, you have just confirmed that your 15 year old daughter has not attended any of her classes for the past three days. With your support group, devise an action plan to address her ditching school. Make sure you consider all six steps of an effective action plan.

(For help, review page 74)

1. Tell your child how you feel.
    a. I love you...
    b. I am concerned because...
    c. Why is this happening...?
    d. Are you okay?
    e. Listen to your child's responses.
2. Establish the RULE.
3. Actively supervise the child's daily activities.
4. Consequences.
5. Consistency/Follow Through
6. What else should I do to help insure success?
   (Remember positive strokes)

Group Activity 6.9

From the list of behaviors you have developed regarding your child on page 56, choose the most destructive behavior you would like to change and create an action plan to address that behavior. For this activity, choose a partner from your support group and work in pairs. Help each other by developing your plans together, one step at a time. (For help review page 74.)

The behavior I must change is ________________________________.

1. Tell your child how you feel.
   a. I love you....
   b. I am concerned because .....
   c. Why is this happening?
   d. Are you okay?
   e. Listen to your child's responses.

2. Establish the rule.

3. Actively supervise your child's daily activities. (How will you accomplish this?)

4. Consequences! (What will they be?)

5. Consistency/Follow Through (How will you accomplish this?)

6. What else should I do to insure success? (Remember positive strokes)

Now share your action plan with your support group. Record any suggestions offered that you feel might improve your plan.

It is natural for parents with strong-willed or out of control children to be anxious or fearful about their child's response to parental interventions. However, anticipating and planning for a child's response can help parents reduce their fears and anxiety.

Group Activity 6.10

1. Working by yourself or with your spouse, take a few minutes to read over the list of possible responses a child might have to parental interventions.

laugh at me
curse at me
threaten to run away
try to hit me
say nothing
ignore me
walk out of the house
start breaking things
yell at me
threaten me
threaten to kill him/herself
walk away from me
refuse to go to school
run away
not think I'm serious
other: ______________________

2. Complete the statement below by filling in the blanks using one or more of the responses listed above.

When I begin by **Six Step Action Plan**, my child will probably: ________________
____

3. Working with your support group, decide on the best parental response for each of your group member's child's reaction and record it in the space below.

Child's Reaction	*Parental Response*

Group Activity 6.11

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to record the name and telephone number of each support group member.

	Name	Telephone Number
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Working with the group, decide which support group member you will call if you need emotional support or other help during the next few weeks. Put an X by your friend's name.

Support Group Notes:

Review Activity 6.12

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. An effective Six Step Action Plan should be developed by parents for ________________ unwanted behavior they want to change.
2. Parents should find ________________ for themselves when they set out to change unwanted adolescent behaviors.
3. When applying negative consequences, parents should take away ________________ on *their child's list* for a ____________ period of time.
4. Parents should occasionally ________________ ________________ their child's daily activities to make sure their child is safe and that the rules are being followed.
5. Parents should tell their children they are ________________ everyday.

everything support every loved spot check short

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?
____

Time to act

We were once confronted by a mother who was at her wit's end. She said that her 15-year-old daughter was: using drugs and alcohol, hanging around with a "bad" group of kids, ditching school and sexually active. The mother wanted to provide her daughter with more discipline and structure, but the girl had threatened to run away from home if her mother did not "leave her alone."

We were unable to convince the mother of the dire need to provide more structure. She feared her daughter would run away. The question we posed to the mother was, "Even if your daughter runs away, what else could she possibly get involved in that could make matters worse?"

Out of fear, the mother failed to supply what her daughter needed. At age 16, the girl became pregnant. By 17, she had developed a drug habit and ran away with her boyfriend.

We must learn to do what is appropriate for our children in spite of their threats to withdraw their love and complaints about our not loving them. Our first duty to our children is to be their parent, not their friend.

We must remember there are certain things only we can provide our children. **Love and affection, structure, supervision and discipline are our responsibilities.** *If we do not parent our children, who will?*

Homework Assignment:

1. Review *Unit 2* and make all necessary preparations for the following two tasks:
2. Discuss with your son or daughter the list of items on page 70, that you have decided is harmful to your child. Tell your child how you feel, advise your child of the new rules regarding these items, and cause them to either be destroyed or returned to the owner, depending on the circumstances.
3. Implement the personal action plan you developed today. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

How did your child react to your action?______________________________

How did you respond? ______________________________

Part Two

Changing Behavior and Improving the Parent/Child Relationship

Unit 7: Finding Help and Support

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Identify and locate the resources available in their own communities
- Discuss the need for emotional support as they continue the process of change at home

Warm up:

In your support group, take a few minutes to share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Destroy or return the items you felt are harmful to your child and implement the personal action plan you developed in class. How did your child react to your plan and action?*

Before We Begin Unit 7:

Take a minute to elect every support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

Support For Parents

During the past six weeks, we have concentrated our efforts on developing the parenting skills necessary to begin the process of change at home. Now that a strong foundation has been laid, we will focus more on our individual parental concerns and personal action plans for behavior change. From this point on, we will use the *parent support group format* to help us continue making changes at home, to learn new skills designed to improve our relationship with our children and to find support for ourselves.

For most parents, translating newly learned parenting skills into effective action will take practice and support. In a support group, parents not only receive emotional support from the group, but practical help as well.

Example:

In one support group, a single mother had been struck by her fourteen year old son on two prior occasions. For that reason, she was afraid to confront her son with the new house rules and begin her carefully designed action plan. After telling her support group of her fears, four of the group members agreed to meet at the mother's house and stand by with her as she explained the new rules to her son. The sight of four additional parents lending his mother support was enough to cause the young man to sit and quietly listen to his mother for the first time in months. Supported by her group and renewed by one small success, this parent was able to continue with her action plan and make positive changes at home.

Group Activity 7.1

Working in your support group, take a few minutes to describe the emotional support you have received from working with your group thus far. *How has the support group helped you?* ______________________________

What are your feelings about lending emotional and practical support to members, this week outside of the scheduled group meetings? ______________________

Help For Children

In the past, parents generally received more help than they do today with the education and supervision of their children: the average class size was smaller and teachers had more time to communicate with parents, after school and summer recreation community programs were available, and assistance from extended family members was our society's norm. Today, with our growing population, shrinking budgets, and changing family structure, less help and support is available.

Despite our budget problems, many programs and support systems designed to help families remain in operation in our communities. However, because most of these programs and systems are not well advertised, parents will need to do some investigating to locate them.

When parents set out to change destructive adolescent behavior, it is important to find help. This is especially true for the single parent who has no partner to help share the responsibilities of raising a family. Well supervised programs can help parents keep children on the right path. For example, by contacting the local city hall or community affairs office, parents can obtain information on local Boy's and Girl's Clubs, YWCA and YMCA Clubs, after school and summer recreation programs, Scouting and Big Brother or Big Sister Organizations. Through county mental health organizations, free family counseling and information on chemical dependency self help programs can be obtained. By calling the local school district office, parents can obtain information on any available after school, adult education, job placement, day care or tutoring programs.

Group Activity 7.2

Working by yourself, take a few minutes to identify your child's immediate needs. For help, review the list below and put a check mark in the box next to every identified need.

Areas of need:	*Organization or Office:*
☐ After school recreation/supervision	________________
☐ Tutoring	________________
☐ Counseling	________________
☐ Male or female role model	________________
☐ Summer recreation program	________________
☐ Involvement in after school clubs/organizations	________________
☐ School sporting activities	________________
☐ Physical Health	________________
☐ Other: ____________ /	________________

Now, working with your support group, decide which of the organizations or offices listed below would probably have information on programs to meet the needs above. Record the name of the organization/s next to the area of need.

City Hall or Community Affairs Office

County Mental Health Organization

School District Office

Department of Social Services

Review Activity 7.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Finding _______ for your children is as important as finding _______________ for yourself.

2. Support groups can offer _____________ as well as emotional support for group members.

3. Children need to be told how much they are _____________ everyday.

practical **support** **help** **loved**

4. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?
____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Support Group Notes:

Homework Assignment:

Locate the telephone numbers to each of the agencies listed below and record the numbers in the space provided. Contact each agency and find out what programs they have available that might help your child or family. Record the programs available through each agency and bring back the information to share with your group next week. If your group chooses, you can divide the resource list evenly among the group members for research.

Agency/Office	*Telephone Number*
1. **Local School District/Adult School/Community College**	

Program Information: ______________________________

2. **City Hall / Community Affairs Office**

Program Information: ______________________________

3. **County Mental Health Agency**

Program Information: ______________________________

4. **Social Services Department**

Program Information: ______________________________

5. **Parks and Recreation Department**

Program Information: ______________________________

6. **Local Law Enforcement** (Crime Prevention Unit)

Program Information: ______________________________

7. **Other** ______________________________

Unit 8: The Dynamics of Change

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List the three elements of change
- Describe the difficulties in implementing change
- Discuss the process of change

Warm Up:

In your support group, take a few minutes to share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *What programs did you find available in your community? Which programs will you be using?*

Before We Begin Unit 8:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

"OK. I tried it and it's not working. In fact, I think it has gotten worse!" This type of statement is usually born out of frustration when, after trying a new parenting technique, the parent sees no immediate change in their child's behavior. Patience! Parents must first recognize that all children are individuals and what will move one child to change will not necessarily move another. Additionally, changing behavior is usually a **slow**, **incremental** and **painful** process for everyone concerned.

Activity 8.1

Try this experiment.

1. Fold your hands together, interlacing your fingers.

   Which of your thumbs is on top, the right or the left? ____________
   Which of your little fingers is on the bottom, the right or the left? ______________

2. Good! Now reverse your hands so that your opposite thumb is on the top and the opposite little finger is on the bottom.

   Describe how it feels? ____
   Does it feel different or uncomfortable? _________________

3. It may even feel a little painful. Imagine that from now on, *the new rule is, you must always fold your hands in this new manner.*

   Would you be able to do it every time? ______________
   Wouldn't it be a slow and uncomfortable process for most of us? _____________

If changing something simple like the manner in which we fold our hands is difficult, how much more difficult would it be to change the way we act or talk? By its very nature, change is a **slow, incremental** and **painful** process for everyone. We are all creatures of habit and usually deeply set in our ways. If changing ourselves is difficult, then influencing the behavior of someone else will certainly not be an easy task.

Parents who seriously set out to change unwanted behaviors can generally expect the behavior of children to get worse before it gets better. Because children do not want to change, they will usually make every effort to *get their parents off their back* by making life miserable around the house.

This type of behavior is designed to punish the parent for attempting to change the child. Adolescents, and especially strong-willed teenagers, are very good at wearing parents down through passive refusals to cooperate or other methods designed to frustrate parents. Part of parenting the strong-willed child, is being able to out wait your child. Children must become more frustrated than the parent. Remember, the person who becomes the most frustrated, changes first.

Group Activity 8.2

Your 16 year old son or daughter has started hanging around with a local street gang. You suspect he/she is also drinking and occasionally using drugs. Recognizing the danger, you tell your child she/he may no longer associate with this group of friends and that the drinking and drug use must stop immediately. Your child screams, "You do not control me," and refuses to obey the new rules.

Working with your support group, brainstorm a list of behaviors this child may try to get you to leave him/her alone.

1. *Example:* Threaten to run away.
2. *Example:* Sneak out of the house at night.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Finally, at one point or another, every parent who begins making changes at home becomes discouraged and feels like he/she is, "Right back to square one." This is because adolescents are often able to come up with dramatic ways to frustrate their parents, or will simply backslide in their progress. This is the **first phase** of change; *the behavior has gotten worse*. In the **second phase** of change, *the negative or unwanted behavior occurs less often. However, when the behavior does occur, it is just as bad as ever.* In the **third phase,** *the behavior not only occurs less often, but with less intensity as well.* Unfortunately, it is often only in this final phase that parents and teens are able to recognize any positive change.

When dealing with strong-willed or out of control children, parents usually have two choices. One, they can voice their opinion and hope the child eventually changes the unwanted behavior, or two, they can develop and put into action a plan designed to bring about change. Usually, there is no middle ground. And with destructive behavior, the stakes are extremely high. There is no quick fix for drug and alcohol use, gang involvement, or any unwanted behavior that has been allowed to continue for prolonged periods of time. For this reason, it is important that parents find emotional support for themselves as they begin the process of change.

Review Activity 8.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. By its very nature, change is a slow, ___________ and ___________ process for everyone concerned.

2. Unwanted behaviors will probably get ___________ before they get better.

3. For parents, the second phase of change will be that the behavior occurs ________ ________, but just as bad as ever.

4. Children are generally driven by ________________ .

5. In phase three of behavioral change, behavior not only occurs _______frequently, but with _________intensity as well.

painful **less often** **emotion** **less** **incremental** **worse**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?
____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Map your progress. This week, carefully monitor the unwanted behavior, for which you developed an action plan in Unit 6. At the end of the week, decide which phase of change your family is currently experiencing.

- ☐ **Phase 1:** The behavior has gotten worse.
- ☐ **Phase 2:** The behavior is occurring less frequently, but just as bad as ever.
- ☐ **Phase 3:** The behavior is occurring less frequently and with less intensity.

Bring back your stories to share with your group.

Unit 9: Managing Conflict in the Home

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Recognize some of the potential causes of parent/child conflict
- List strategies for reducing conflict in the home

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Which phase of change do you find your family experiencing?*

Before We Begin Unit 9:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

As stated in Unit 8, when parents begin to make changes at home, things are likely to get worse before they get better. Children will usually try to frustrate their parent's attempt to influence behavior and that often means a significant change in the child's attitude as well. Parents may not be able to eliminate parent/child conflict entirely, especially during the adolescent years. However, by recognizing situations that are likely to create a struggle, parents will put themselves in a better position to avoid or reduce the level of family conflict.

Group Activity 9.1

Review the list of situations, likely to create a parent/child conflict. (See 1-5 below)

___1. A mother asks her daughter to clean up her room, immediately. One hour later, the mother walks by her daughter's bedroom and sees that the room has not been touched.

___2. A child asks a parent if he/she can go out. The parent says, "no." The child becomes angry and begins yelling at the parent.

___3. A parent tries to *physically* stop his/her teen from leaving the house.

___4. A parent and child find themselves in a heated discussion about dating. Both parent and child are becoming angry, but the discussion is far from over.

___5. A father wakes up to find his daughter sneaking into the house two hours past her curfew. She has been drinking, but is not drunk.

Now, review the strategies designed to help reduce parent/child conflict. (See A-E below). Working with your support group, match the strategy that the group feels will work best to help reduce the conflict in the situations above. Record the group's choice by writing the letter of the strategy chosen, next to the appropriate situation above.

A. Tell your child that you do not control them, but if they leave, the consequences will be severe.

B. Calmly tell your child you are removing everything on *their list,* until they do what you asked.

C. Tell your child that you are very upset with her behavior and too angry to discuss the situation now. Tell her you will discuss it with her in the morning when you are calm, and she is sober.

D. Tell your child to go to his/her room and when they are calm, you will discuss it with them further.

E. Tell your child that you would like to discuss the situation with them further. However, it is obvious that both of you are getting upset. Suggest that you both walk away and take twenty minutes to calm down. Resume the discussion after twenty minutes.

Time outs can be effective in reducing family conflict whenever a parent or child becomes defensive, when voices rise, arguments begin or offensive language is used. Going to neutral corners of the house allows both the parent and child an opportunity to regain their composure in a manner not seen as punishment by the child.

In Unit 2, we discussed how our children are driven by emotion, and how their emotional nature often causes outbursts of anger. However, it is equally important for us to realize that parents also can become too emotionally charged to effectively deal with their children. At one time or another the stresses and pressures of raising a family in today's world affects every parent. When parents recognize that their day has been stressful and nerves are on edge, it is better to put off discussions regarding problematic adolescent behavior until the parent feels calm enough to deal more rationally with the situation.

Another method of reducing family conflict is *negotiating a compromise* with our children. There is a tendency in human nature to support what we helped to create. Therefore, if a child helps to create the rules, he/she will be more likely to follow them. Certainly, with issues like drug and alcohol use, gang involvement or gang clothing, etc., there can be no compromise. However, children should be allowed an opportunity to suggest rules regarding curfew, hair styles and other issues. Children often need to be reminded that rules are designed to be changed over and over again, based upon the maturity of the child.

Example: A 16 year old girl has a regular weekend curfew of 11:00 PM. The child complains that she should have a curfew of 2:00 AM, like the rest of her friends. The parents explain to their daughter that they would actually feel better if she was home by 9:00 PM. But, they realize she will probably find a 9:00 PM curfew unrealistic. By the same token, the daughter must realize that mom and dad cannot accept a 2:00 AM curfew. From there, the parents and child can hopefully meet in the middle, (11:30 PM) , and find a curfew time that is agreeable to everyone. These parents should also inform their daughter that they are confident she will continue to respect the new curfew time.

Group Activity 9.2

Working with your support group, brainstorm a list of rules or items that could be negotiated with your child.

1. *Example:* Hair styles.
2. *Example:* Curfew times.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Remember, every child is different and what can be negotiated with one child, may not work with another. Still, compromise is a valuable tool for reducing family conflict and brings children into the decision making process, allowing them to practice a valuable life skill.

Review Activity 9.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. ______ ____ can be very effective in reducing family conflicts.
2. Children are more likely to ____________ a rule they helped to create.
3. Certain rules or items can be _______________ with children to reach a _______________ .
4. Parents should never confront their children when they are __________ .

support **compromise** **angry** **negotiated** **Time outs**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?
____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

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7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

For the next week, carefully monitor your discussions with your child. At the first hint of anger or defensiveness, try taking a *time out.*

and

If the opportunity presents itself, try negotiating a compromise with your child over a small issue. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

I called for a *time out* when:

My child and I were able to reach a compromise over:

Old Rule or Norm:

Compromise:

Unit 10: Effective Communication Skills, Part 1: Active Listening

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List components of active listening
- Discuss potential barriers to active listening

Warm Up:

In your support groups, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Were you able to find an opportunity to negotiate a compromise with your child? Did you find it necessary to take a time out? Did either strategy serve to reduce conflict in the home?*

Before We Begin Unit 10:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

Listening is the first step to effective communication between a parent and child. Unfortunately, listening to a child is a skill many parents have not mastered. In this unit we will be discussing *active* listening, a method of listening that includes empathy and seeks understanding. But before we explore what it means to actively listen to our children, lets take a look at the reasons why parents may fail in this first step of effective communication and the problems it causes.

Group Activity 10.1

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of reasons why parents may fail to listen to their child.

1. *Example:* Parent is too busy
2. *Example:* Child begins the conversation with a statement that is upsetting to the parent.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Whatever the reason, when parents fail to stop and listen to what their children are saying, it sends a negative message to the child.

Group Activity 10.2

Picture yourself working inside the home when your son or daughter walks into the room and begins talking to you. You are very busy at the moment and do not stop what you are doing. You briefly answer your child, but do not look up from your work.

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of possible feelings or thoughts your child may have as a result of the conversation above. What kind of message did we send to our child?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Active listening involves more than just lending an ear to a child. It requires a parents complete concentration. The five steps of active listening are:

Step 1 Stop what you are doing: Parents must take the necessary time out to really listen to their child.

Step 2 Look at your child: Making eye contact tells your child you are ready to listen. A parent's body language (posture) and facial expressions also indicate an interest to listen. Parents should make sure these non-verbal signals we send to our children reflect a willingness to listen. Focus on your child. Try to push every thing else from your mind.

Step 3 Listen to your child: Parents need to just listen to their child without interrupting, arguing or giving advice.

Step 4 Rephrase or repeat what your child says: This step encourages parents to be a good listener. It also helps parents to understand their child's meaning and feelings. Rephrasing also helps children recognize and clarify their emotional feelings.

Step 5 Be empathetic: Seek to understand your child's emotions in the situation he/she is describing. Try to put yourself in your child's position. Save your advise for later.

Here is one example of a parent *actively* listening to her child:

Robert: "I don't like hunting for work!"

Mom: "It sounds like you **hate** job hunting."

Robert: "Yeah! It just bums me out."

Mom: "It sounds as if you are **very** frustrated with your job hunt."

Robert: "Nobody wants to hire kids my age."

Mom: "It is hard looking for work at your age."

Robert: "Sure is. There aren't enough jobs and I'm **not** working *fast food.*"

Mom: "Sounds like working fast food is something you would avoid at all costs."

Robert: "You got that right. Talking to people all day who treat you like dirt. Having your friends see you wearing some **stupid** uniform."

Mom: "Sounds like you would be humiliated working in a job like that."

Robert: "I'd just die if Susan saw me like that."

Mom: "I can understand how you must feel. Looking for work at your age can be **very** discouraging, especially when all the jobs seem to be in a fast food restaurant. I too can remember being discouraged looking for work when I was your age. The only jobs available then seemed to be working a news paper route."

This mother could have offered her son advice several times during this conversation. But by actively listening to her child, she was able to demonstrate understanding and empathy for her son's position and feelings. Later, when her son is finished sharing his frustrations, there will be plenty of time for the parent to assist the child in developing alternative solutions to working fast food.

Group Activity 10.3

Note: For this activity, members will each play two roles: a good listener and a concerned parent. The *listeners* role will be to listen to his/her partner. Remember the power of eye contact, posture, facial expressions, clarification and empathy.

Step 1: Working by yourself, think of an incident that occurred between you and your child recently. Using just a few words, record the incident below.

____

____

Step 2: Choose someone from your support group to be your partner.

Step 3: Decide who will play the concerned parent. Tell your partner about the incident between you and your child and how it made you feel.

Step 4: Working by yourself, answer the questions below:

1. How did it feel to have someone doing nothing but listening to you?

   ____

2. How did you know your partner wanted to understand how you felt?

   ____

3. How did your partner show empathy for your situation and feelings?

   ____

4. How did your partner seek to clarify your meaning and feelings?

   ____

Step 5: Switch roles and complete steps 3 and 4.

Children, like adults, need to be listened to and understood. Active listening promotes effective communication, improves the parent/child relationship and helps children feel better about themselves. When we listen to our children we show that we value, accept and respect them. In turn, children value themselves more. Active listening contributes greatly to our children's self esteem.

Review Activity 10.4

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. When children speak to their parents, parents should ________ what they are doing and signal they are listening by making ______ __________ with their child.

2. When children are speaking, parents should not argue, interrupt or give advice to their children. Parents should just _____________.

3. To increase understanding, parents can ____________ or ___________ what they heard from their child.

4. Parents should occasionally conduct ______ _______ to help insure their children are safe.

listen **spot checks** **eye contact** **stop** **repeat** **rephrase**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

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Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Every time you have a conversation with your child during the next week, actively listen to him/her. Try not to argue, offer advice or interrupt while your child is speaking, just listen. If your child asks for advice, help your child develop possible options and identify potential positive and negative outcomes to such options.

Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

I actively listened to my child when:

____

____

____

____

____

____

My child's response was:

____

____

____

____

____

____

Unit 11: Effective Communication Skills, Part 2: Communicating Parental Views and Feelings

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List tips for communicating parental views and feelings to children
- Develop effective "I messages"

Warm Up:

In your support groups, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Were you able to actively listen to your child during the week? What was your child's response when you just listened to him/her?*

Before We Begin Unit 11:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

Most parents find it difficult to communicate with their teenage children. However, if you are the parent of a strong-willed or out of control child, communication can seem down right impossible at times. Because parents of strong-willed children are often angry at their kids, cross words are frequently exchanged which only drives the parent and child further apart on critical issues. The purpose of this unit is to offer some basic tips on expressing parental views, that are designed to keep the lines of communication open and strengthen parent/child relationships.

In week 4, we discussed confronting problematic behavior, and all of the concepts we reviewed in that unit certainly apply here. Before confronting a child, parents should consider the following:

Decide who owns the problem. Parents can determine who owns the problem by asking themselves, whose desires or purposes are not being met? A child's behavior is only a problem for the parent, when it interferes with the parent's needs. A child's missed curfew interferes with a parent's need to know the safety of her family.

Address the behavior, but avoid attacking your child. Parents should avoid assigning blame to the child. Statements like, "You're always late; what is wrong with you?, attack the child instead of the behavior and often provoke a negative response from children. Instead of attacking the child, parents should ask open ended questions, designed to discover why their child was late. Example: "Mary, can you tell me what happened that caused you to be late tonight?" ,or, "Mary, what was your understanding of our conversation regarding your curfew time?"

Communicate your feelings to your children. Parents should remember children are driven by emotion and that reason and logic may not be effective tools for communication. However, children experience and understand many of the same feelings as adults. Therefore, when a parent tells a child how he/she feels, it promotes communication. (See example below)

Use I messages to convey your thoughts and feelings. Parents should explain their concerns and feelings regarding their child's behavior, using *I messages. I messages* should be used to communicate both positive strokes and problematic behaviors to children. Example: "I feel scared when it is past curfew time and you're not home. I keep thinking something terrible has happened to you."

In this "I" message, the child now more clearly understands both that her behavior has created more anxiety for her mother and how her mother feels about it. Additionally, the message was delivered without attacking the child.

Group Activity 11.1

Working with your support group, review the unwanted scenarios listed below. For each scenario, clarify the true problem, identify the accompanying parental feeling, and the tangible effect. After recording the feeling and effect, develop an appropriate *I* message for the parent.

Example:

Scenario	*True Problem*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Robert returns home late, 2 hours after curfew.	Curfew	Fear, anger anxiety	Unable to sleep

I message to Robert: "When you are late, I feel angry and anxious. I'm fearful something horrible has happened to you, and am unable to sleep."

Scenario	*True Problem*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Melissa is caught with marijuana at school.			

I message to Melissa:____

Scenario	*True Problem*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Henry receives a report card and is failing 4 classes.			

I message to Henry:____

Scenario	*True Problem*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Angie's new boyfriend is a gang member.			

I message to Angie: ____

I messages should also be used to deliver positive strokes or positive messages to children.

Group Activity 11.2

Working with your support group, review the wanted scenarios listed below. For each scenario, clarify the desired behavior, identify the accompanying parental feeling, and the tangible effect. After recording the feeling and effect, develop an appropriate positive *I message* for the parent..

Example:

Scenario	*Desired Behavior*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Mario cleans kitchen	*Responsibility*	*Proud, appreciative*	*Clean house*

I message: "I appreciate you cleaning our kitchen; having a clean house helps me stay organized."

Scenario	*Desired Behavior*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Tanya returns home on time.			

I message:

____

____

Scenario	*Desired Behavior*	*Parent Feeling*	*True Effect*
Rudy's report card shows improvement.			

I message:

____

____

Additional strategies for promoting effective communication with children are:

Avoid sarcasm, ridicule and pressure. Some parents attempt to use sarcasm or ridicule to try to motivate their children to change. This dangerous technique, even if momentarily successful, damages the child's self esteem and often drives a wedge between the parent and child. It may take some practice, but when parents get into the habit of thinking before they speak to their children, most of the negative or attacking language can be eliminated.

A tip: celebrate the success, regardless how small.

Help children work through their problems. Before offering advice, parents should assist their children to brainstorm a variety of possible solutions. Next, help your child identify possible outcomes for each of those choices.

A tip: Parents should avoid solving their children's problems for them, instead help them to learn a valuable process for problem solving.

Review Activity 11.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Parents should use __ ___________ to convey their thoughts and feelings to their children.

2. Parents should communicate their ______________ to their children.

3. Parents need to communicate negative behaviors to their children without ____________ the child.

4. __________ term consequences are more effective than long term consequences because they fit the way ____________ think.

attacking **feelings** **I messages** **children** **Short**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

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Check In:

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Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Carefully monitor your discussions with your child during the next week. Use *I* messages as often as possible when delivering both positive strokes and parental views on unwanted behaviors. When you can, record the *I* message you give to your children as well as your children's response.

Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

Positive *I* messages I gave my children:

____

____

____

I messages regarding unwanted behaviors:

____

____

____

My children's reactions were:

____

____

____

Unit 12: Building Positive Self Concepts

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Recognize the negative messages that damage self esteem
- List methods of promoting positive self concepts in their children

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *Were you able to find opportunities to give your children effective I messages? How did your children react?*

Before We Begin Unit 12:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

Positive and Negative Messages

As we stated in Unit 1, parents do not control children, but they do have tremendous influence. This is especially true in the area of self concept. The manner in which many children see themselves can be directly attributed to the messages they receive from their parents.

Because parents of strong-willed children are frequently upset or angry at their kids, the messages sent to the children are often negative.

Examples of some of the negative messages we send to our children are:

"You're a spoiled brat."
"Why don't you be good for a change?"
"You are the most inconsiderate child I know."
"You are so thoughtless."
"Are you ever going to grow up?"
"That was stupid."
'Why don't you ever do what I ask?"

All of these negative messages have a significant impact on a child's self esteem. When children hear enough negative messages, they develop deep feelings of guilt, remorse and inadequacy. These children end up feeling rejected by their parents and believe they are just *not good enough.* To add to parents' frustration, strong-willed children often respond to these negative messages by rejecting all parental input and becoming even more stubborn and hostile.

In the last unit, we discussed confrontational messages that attack the child instead of the behavior. Certainly all of the examples listed above fall into that category. Learning to substitute *I messages* helps parents to convey their views and feelings without damaging the esteem of their child.

A parent in one of our groups had experienced years of problematic behavior with his son. Whenever the father would catch his son doing something right and try to give him a positive stroke, the boy would walk away. Realizing his son needed to hear positive messages, the father solved the problem by bragging about his son's specific behavior to another adult when he was sure his son could overhear the conversation.

Throughout this program, we have discussed and practiced skills to increase parental influence, designed at least in part, to improve our children's sense of capability.

Group Activity 12.1

Review the areas of parental influence in the column on the left. Now working with your support group, take a few minutes to examine the positive messages in **bold** print below. Which of these positive messages would most likely be sent to a child through each area of parental influence listed. Record your answers by writing the positive message in the space provided. (More than one message could be used for each area).

Area of Parental Influence	*Positive Message Received by the Child:*
Demonstrated love and affection:	**"I am special"**
Giving a positive stroke:	**"I did well"**
Actively listening to a child:	
Improved school performance:	
Participating in family activities and chores	
Active supervision:	
I messages for unwanted behavior	
Positive consequences:	

"I am smart." **"I did it."** **"What I have to say is important."**

"I am an important part of this family" **"I am not being attacked."**

"My parents care about me."

If someone asked you to cook dinner for twenty people and you knew nothing about cooking, you would probably feel very insecure. But if you knew how to cook and had prepared large meals before, you would probably feel very comfortable in the kitchen.

Our point is that children must start and learn to do things at some point and there is no safer place to learn than in the security of your own home with people who love you. When children are learning to do things for the first time, parents should:

- Encourage and support their child's effort
- Not expect nor demand perfection
- Break large jobs down into small tasks
- Celebrate the successes but insure children are praised just as much for their effort

In order for children to develop strong concepts of self worth, parents need to find ways of delivering positive messages regularly.

Group Activity 12.2

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to develop a list of ways parents can convey each of the positive messages below.

You are loved.

You are secure.

You are you, individual and special.

You matter to me.

You are capable; you can do anything you set your mind to.

Choices

Parents should allow their children as much individual flexibility and choice as possible. As long as children are held accountable for the choices they make, they will learn and grow. A simple formula that can be applied here is:

Choice + Responsibility for Choice = Growth **or** *We learn from our own mistakes.*

This formula is especially true for the strong-willed child. Strong-willed children generally do not accept parental advice nor are they willing to use the mistakes their parents made as learning experiences for themselves. These children want to, and usually will make their own choices. Failure is a part of life and we all experience it from time to time. We have all made wrong choices or mistakes that set us back. And as much as parents would like to keep their children from the consequences of their mistakes, consequences are the most effective learning process for adolescents.

In allowing children choices, we are certainly **not** referring to the destructive choices our children make nor the destructive behaviors discussed in this program. When children make decisions that can negatively impact the rest of their lives, parents can and should do everything in their power to intervene. But in all other areas, children who make and are held responsible for their choices, develop a strong sense of capability.

In order to insure growth, children must feel both the positive and negative consequences of their own choices. Therefore, parents must learn not to rescue their children. Parents rescue children when they solve the problem for the child. Instead of rescuing children, parents should help their child brainstorm a list of possible solutions to the problem. Then by helping the child explore the likely outcome of each identified solution, the "best" method of solving the problem can be chosen by the child.

Concepts of self worth are learned throughout life. Our confidence in our ability grows or shrinks based upon our successes and failures. But when children leave home with a strong sense of capability and self worth, they are more likely to experience success and less likely to allow the everyday set backs of life to keep them down.

As parents, we must remember that we are trying to raise capable adults and not children. In order for a child to develop into a self reliant adult, responsibility must be given to and accepted by the child. Because parents remain the most influential person in a child's life, the messages we send to our children will either significantly build or tear down our children's concept of self worth.

Review Activity 12.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. The manner in which children see themselves can be directly attributed to the __________ they receive from their parents.

2. Negative messages do significant damage to a child's ______ __________ .

3. Parents should ____________ and ____________ their child's efforts.

4. It is just as important to celebrate a child's __________ as it is to celebrate a child's success.

5. Parents should never confront their children when they are _________ .

encourage **support** **angry** **attempt**

self esteem **messages**

6. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

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Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Give your child five positive messages during the next week. For help, choose one of the messages you developed from each of the categories listed in activity 12.2, on page 120. Bring back your stories to share with your support group next week. Remember not to get discouraged if you see no immediate reaction from your child. (If necessary, review,Unit 8)

1. My first message was: ______________________________

   My child's response was: ______________________________

2. My second message was: ______________________________

   My child's response was: ______________________________

3. My third message was: ______________________________

   My child's response was: ______________________________

4. My forth message was: ______________________________

   My child's response was: ______________________________

5. My fifth message was: ______________________________

   My child's response was: ______________________________

Unit 13: Consistency

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Discuss why it may be difficult for parents to maintain consistency with their children
- List at least three areas in which parents should demonstrate consistency with their children
- Describe two or more of the negative messages sent to children when parents are inconsistent

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *What positive messages did you give to your child? How did your child respond?*

Before We Begin Unit 13:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

It has been said that the best way to teach a child to **misbehave** is to **inconsistently** enforce the house rules. Phrases like, "OK, but don't let it happen again," teach our children that consequences do not always occur if the rule is broken. Therefore, without consequences, rules do not always have to be followed. As one teenager noted to us, "It is easier to get forgiveness than permission."

Parents should always enforce the rules. When children disobey a rule and find there are no consequences, they will test the rule again in hope of another victory. We call this *intermittent reinforcement* and it is *the* most powerful method of shaping behavior. Children who experience *intermittent reinforcement* will continue to test the rules until they discover that the rules are firm and will always be enforced by their parents.

Example: If a person were to gamble on the horse races 100 times and lose his/her money every time, chances are that person would stop betting on the horse races. However, if that person won money at the races even once, he or she would be encouraged to continue gambling, looking for the next win.

When parents fail to enforce the rule, just 1 out of every 10 or 15 times, children will continue to break the rule, looking for the next win. Because we love our children, no parent enjoys restricting their children or seeing them unhappy. Therefore, there is a tendency for parents to be inconsistent when it comes to enforcing the rules.

Group Activity 13.1

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of reasons why parents may inconsistently enforce the rules.

1. *Example:* Parent does not like to see their child unhappy.
2. *Example*: Child makes life miserable around the house when he/she is on restriction.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

It is not just with house rules that parents should demonstrate consistency.

Group Activity 13.2

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of areas in which parents should demonstrate consistency with their children.

1. *Example*: Love and affection
2. *Example*: Meals eaten together as a family
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Because parents are only human, they may find it difficult to be consistent with the manner in which they deal with their children. Unfortunately, no matter what the reason, every time we are inconsistent with our children, we send them the wrong message.

Activity 13.3

1. Think back to the last time you were inconsistent with your child and record the instance below.

____

____

____

2. What message/s do you think you sent your child by being inconsistent.

Example: The rule is not that important.

____

____

____

Consistency is one of the most effective tools parents can use to help them demonstrate love and affection, communicate parental standards and values, shape behavior and build positive self concepts in children.

Group Activity 13.4

Working by yourself, record your answers to the following questions.

1. What type of **consistent** support have you received from your support group?
   ____

2. How has meeting with your support group helped you to maintain **consistency** at home?
   ____

3. In what ways would it be beneficial to continue meeting with your group as you continue the process of change at home? ______________________________

4. Take a few minutes to discuss the idea of continuing your support group meetings. What do the other members think? ______________________________

Review Activity 13.5

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. The best way to teach a child to misbehave, is to ____________ enforce the house rules.

2. When parents fail to give appropriate consequences for broken house rules even once, children will __________ the rule again looking for another ______ .

3. ____________ can also help parents convey their love to their children.

4. Parents should take away __________ on their child's list for a __________ period of time.

win **Consistency** **short** **inconsistently** **everything** **break**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?
   ____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Catch yourself being consistent. During the next week, record every opportunity you have to be consistent enforcing the house rules, demonstrating love and affection, communicating values and giving positive strokes to your children. Bring back your stories to share with your group.

I demonstrated **consistency** to my children this week when I :

Unit 14: Expectations, Standards and Values

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Communicate their expectations to their children
- Recognize the importance of teaching children family values

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *In what ways did you catch yourself consistently enforcing the house rules, demonstrating love and affection and giving positive strokes to your child?*

Before We Begin Unit 14:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

Expectations

In what is now a well-published experiment, two teachers were given classes of 28 students each. Although both classes were nearly identical in terms of the students' academic ability, one teacher was told that her class was far below the average and the best she could expect would be C and D grades from her students. The second teacher was told that her class was far above average and her students were more than capable of A and B grades.

The first teacher, thinking that her class was far below average, expected no more than average work. The second teacher, who was told her students were all gifted, expected A and B grades from her class. At the end of the school year, despite the fact that both classes were equal, the teacher that expected A and B work from her students, received A and B work. The teacher who expected no more than average work from her students, received no more than average work.

Unfortunately, many parents facing difficult behavior problems with their children, have come to **expect** their children will do the wrong thing. Children, like the students mentioned above, will often rise or sink to their parent's expectations for their behavior.

Group Activity 14.1

What are your personal expectations for your child? Working with your support group, develop a list of expectations for your children.

1. *Example*: I expect my child to receive a college education.
2. *Example:* I expect my child not to use drugs or drink alcohol.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

When children are out of control or suffering through a difficult period, parents should not lower their expectations for their child. When parents expect the best and communicate it, children will eventually live up to those expectations.

Standards and Values

When parents examine the world in which they are raising their children, what they see can be frightening. Some parents look around to see how other parents are coping and then try to do a little better than the standard they see presented by society in general. Unfortunately, society's standards continue to fall. What was unacceptable yesterday, is tolerated by society today.

Consider the messages children get from the world today. *Respect life.* (But children see so many acts of violence on television, studies show they are insensitive to death by age 10.) *AIDS can kill.* (But they are blasted with sexual messages daily.) *Just Say No To Drugs.* (But no one in society seems to be saying *no* to anything.)

The messages children get from society today are confusing at best. As long as parents use society's norm as a yardstick to develop their parental rules and values, the standards will continue to fall.

Activity 14.2

Working by yourself, take a few minutes to think about and record *your* standards and values. Feel free to use the categories below as a guide, or develop your own list.
What do you believe regarding:

1. God or Higher Power:
2. Life:
3. Family:
4. Education:
5. Work:
6. Drug and alcohol use:
7. Sex:
8. Marriage:
9. Honesty:

In a recent survey of 9th grade students in Southern California, 18% of the females and 37% of the male students thought it-would be okay for a male to force sexual intercourse on a female who was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time. We realize, that if given enough time, most of these students will probably come to change their minds about date rape. However, our point is that the opinion expressed by most of these students probably did not come from their parents, but from the world in which these children live.

If children are to effectively cope with society today, parents must communicate and teach their expectations, standards and values to their children.

Review Activity 14.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Children will often _____ ___ to , or _____ to their parents level of _________ for their behavior.
2. Parents must ____________ their expectations to their children.
3. Children learn ________ and __________ messages from society today.
4. Active supervision can be described by five simple words: _______, what _______, when and ______ .

communicate **sink** **who** **mixed** **why**

dangerous **where** **live up** **expectations**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
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5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Take time out this week to communicate or restate *your* **expectations, standards** and **values** to your children. Use the lists you developed during activities 10.1 and 10.2 to help you get started. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

My expectations for my child are:

My values are:

Unit 15: Promoting Family Unity

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- List strategies to promote family unity
- Discuss methods of helping a child recognize his/her importance to the family unit

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *How did your child react to your conversation regarding your expectations, standards and values?*

Before We Begin Unit 15:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

In Unit 5, we explored the many reasons why children join gangs. One of the main reasons discussed was, *no sense of family.* When children do not feel they are an important part of their own family, or when family unity does not exist, they often seek out other groups to satisfy their need to belong. By strengthening the family unit and helping children to feel they are an important member of the family, parents can help prevent many of the problems children face today.

Adolescent children naturally begin spending less time with their families as they grow older. Still, no matter how old children become, some time needs to be spent with family. A strong sense of family is not developed by accident. Parents who have been successful in creating strong family units, have generally planned, structured and scheduled family events designed to bring family members together. In one study, researchers discovered that when families ate dinner together, children performed better in school. Perhaps it was because parents took the opportunity to ask their children about their homework, or because the parents used dinner time to help convey their values on education. Whatever the reason, families spending good times together promotes children's success.

Group Activity 15.1

1. Working with your support group and using statements A & B as examples, take a few minutes to fill in the blanks of statements C & D below.
2. Using A as an example, brainstorm, and record in the spaces provided, ways parents can schedule or structure events at home, to accomplish statements B & D.

***Example*:**

A. The family that **eats** together, stays together.

1) Schedule one dinner time for the entire family. Insist everyone eat dinner together as a family.

2) If possible, take time out to sit down with your children for 20 minutes at lunch time.

3) Schedule a convenient breakfast time for the family and wake everyone to eat as a family.

4) When it is not possible to eat breakfast together during the week, schedule a weekly Saturday or Sunday breakfast for the family.

B The family that **plays** together, stays together.

1) ____________________

2) ____________________

3) ____________________

4) ____________________

C. The family that ________ together, stays together.

1) ____________________

2) ____________________

3) ____________________

4) ____________________

D. The family that ________ together, stays together.

1) ____________________

2) ____________________

3) ____________________

4) ____________________

Remember, even if parents have to force the issue with adolescent children, some time must be spent with family.

In addition to family unity, a child must also feel that he/she is an important member of the family.

Group Activity 15.2

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of ways parents can help children feel they are an important part of the family.

1. *Example:* Involve the child in important family discussions and ask for his/her opinion.
2. *Example:* Invite the child to help create the family rules.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Children, despite what some of them may say, want and need a strong family unit. Remember, there is a tendency in human nature to support what you helped to create. So when children feel they are an important part of the family, their help and support should naturally follow.

Review Activity 15.3

With your support group, take a few minutes to complete the following statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. No matter how old children become, _______ _______ needs to be spent with _____________ .
2. Children need to feel they are an _____________ member of the family.
3. Families should _____ _______ together.
4. Children often join ________ because they feel no sense of ___________ .

important **meals** **some** **family** **time**

family **eat** **gangs**

4. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

1. In the space provided below, record all of the ideas for promoting family unity developed by your support group in activity 15.1, on page 139.
2. Sometime during the next week, call a family meeting. Ask the family to choose **what they feel**, is the best idea from each of the four categories developed by your group in activity 15.1.
3. Now incorporate those ideas into your family's daily or weekly schedule. Remember to hold firm despite any complaints you may get from your children. No matter what your children may say, they want, need and will benefit from a strong family unit.

Bring back your stories to share with your group.

The family that **eats** together, stays together.

____
____
____

The family that **plays** together, stays together.

____
____
____

The family that ______ together, stays together.

____
____
____

The family that _______ together, stays together.

____
____
____

Unit 16: Putting It Together and Making It Work

Objectives:

Parents will be able to:

- Discuss the benefits of continuing the support group process
- Facilitate support group meetings on their own

Warm Up:

In your support group, share your stories from last week's homework assignment. *What ideas did you or your children choose from the four categories on promoting family unity? How did your children react to your meeting?*

Before We Begin Unit 16:

Take a minute to elect **every** support group member to one of the group roles below. Record the member's name next to his/her assigned role.

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Group Work:

For the past fifteen weeks, we have reviewed and practiced the parenting techniques necessary to bring about lasting behavioral change and improve the relationship with our children. Now it is time to finish the structured program and move on. In this final unit we will review what we have learned, map our progress and make the necessary plans to continue the process of change.

Program Review

Although the information contained in the last fifteen units can seem overwhelming, most of the parenting techniques we have examined can be summarized in the following parental advice:

> **Set aside time for your children every day.** Every parent, but especially parents of strong-willed children, needs to set aside time with their children to focus on the *positive*. This is a time to treat your child as you would your best friend, recognizing strengths, acknowledging growth and just listening.
>
> **Pay attention to your children's behavior.** Parents should know what danger signs to look for in their child's behavior and actively supervise their children.
>
> **Be prepared.** Parents should think before they speak and plan before they act. Parents must *courageously* enforce the house rules and limits set using their *six step action plans.*
>
> **Find support for yourself.** Change is a difficult process. Finding the necessary practical and emotional support promotes the process of positive change.

Group Activity 16.1

Review the list of parental subjects in *italics* below. Working with your support group, match each subject with the appropriate area of parental advise in **bold** print. Some subjects may be matched to more than one area. Record your answers by writing the number of area next to the subject in the space provided. (For help, see page 144)

1. **Set aside time for your children every day.** (Recognize strengths, acknowledge growth and just listen)
2. **Pay attention to your children's behavior.** (Watch for danger signs and actively supervise your children)
3. **Be prepared.** (Have a definite plan before you speak and act, and stick to it.)
4. **Find. support for yourself.**

Examples:

_1_*Love and Affection*
___*Positive Strokes*
___*Establish the Rule*
___*Peer Associations*
___*Frustration*
___*Don't ever give up*
___*Positive Consequences*
___*"I" Messages*
___*Parental Anxiety*
___*Sense of family*
___*Six Step Action Plan*
___*Addressing Prob. Behavior*
___*Homework Assign. Sheet*
___*Take everything away*

_1_*Eat Meals Together*
___*Build Family Unity*
___*The Extended List*
___*Support Groups*
___*Parental Values*
___*Gangs*
___*Dynamics of Change*
___*Eye Contact*
___*Never confront in anger*
___*Occult*
___*Behavioral Changes*
___*Who, What & When*
___*Don't attack the child*
___*Short term consequences*

_3_*Negative Consequences*
___*Finding Help*
___*Time Out*
___*Compromising*
___*Active Listening*
___*Spot Checks*
___*Creating Structure*
___*Encourage Children*
___*Consistency*
___*Drug and Alcohol Use*
___*Communicate Feelings*
___*Where & Why*
___*Who owns the problem*
___*Parents control things*

Map Your Progress

Activity 16.2

Working by yourself or with your spouse, think back to the first day of this program and record the primary behavior problem you were having with your child. (For help, see pages 26 & 56.)

Consider the behavior problem above and decide which phase of change your family is currently experiencing. Record your answer by checking the appropriate box.

☐ **Phase 1:** The behavior has gotten worse.

☐ **Phase 2:** The behavior is occurring less frequently, but just as bad as ever.

☐ **Phase 3:** The behavior is occurring less frequently and with less intensity.

Now compare today's answer, to the answer on your homework assignment on page 94.

For parents who have yet to see any change in their child's behavior, try not to be discouraged. Remember, there is no quick fix for drug and alcohol use, gang involvement, or *any* unwanted behavior that has been allowed to continue for prolonged periods of time. When parents stick to their action plans and refuse to give up, anything is possible.

Self-Help Support Groups

We have found that in addition to awareness, practice and desire, parents also need emotional support to continue the process of change at home. If you have been with us the past sixteen weeks, you have certainly demonstrated the desire and you now have the knowledge and practice. But, emotional support cannot come from this workbook. That is why we strongly recommend you continue meeting with your support group on your own. We will continue to be a resource to you for the exceptional or unusual situation, but as a group you have developed the knowledge and skills to work effectively together on your own.

Group Activity 16.3

Consider your current situation with your child. With your support group, take a few minutes to share your feelings about the support group process.

1. In what ways has your support group helped you and your family?

   ____

2. How can continuing to meet with your group help your home situation?

   ____

3. How does the rest of your group feel?

   ____

Group Activity 16.4

If your group has decided to continue meeting, the first task is to decide where your group will meet. Working with your support group, take a few minutes to choose a date, time and location for your first meeting

In choosing a location, your group should take into consideration the following:

- Is there easy access for all members?
- Is there enough space to accommodate all members?
- Are there enough chairs for the group?
- Can confidentiality be maintained at the location?

Will you be able to continue to meet in the present location? ,or, Will you meet at a group member's home, church or community building?

Our first meeting will be located at: ________________________________

We will meet on: (day/date)__________ from: __________AM/PM to: __________ AM/PM

The telephone number at the meeting location is: (   ) ____________________

Group Activity 16.5

Working with your support group, record the name and telephone number of every group member that will be attending future meetings.

	Name	**Telephone Number**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

We recommend that your group meet on a weekly basis from 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The group roles of Facilitator, Recorder, Time Keeper and Nurturer should be rotated and shared among the group members. If your group chooses, members can take turns bringing refreshments and if necessary, the task of child care can also be shared by your support group members.

In order to keep your group running smoothly:

Start your meetings on time. When meetings start on time, group members usually arriveon time.

End your meetings on time. Group members may have other commitments. Parents who must leave on time are put on the spot if the meeting runs overtime.

Use the meeting format outlined in the book. This is the same format you have used for the past ten weeks. It will help add structure to your meetings.

We realize that for parents, and especially parents of strong-willed children, the learning process never ends. But parents should not expect themselves to be perfect. Every parent has and will make mistakes raising their children.

D.W. Winnicott, a psychiatrist who worked with parents and adolescents, coined the phrase, "Good enough mothering." That phrase could certainly be changed to, "Good enough parenting." What Winnicott said was, parents cannot expect perfection from themselves and mistakes will occur. These normal parental mistakes will not prevent a child from developing into a healthy adult.

We cannot entirely eliminate our mistakes. But, if parents continue to practice the parenting techniques learned in this program, they can reduce the number and type of mistakes they make to a level that is *good enough.*

When parents with strong-willed children courageously enforce their limits, take time out for their children and *refuse* to give up the fight to change destructive adolescent behavior, anything is possible.

Review Activity 16.6

Working with your support group, take a few minutes to complete the statements by filling in the blanks using the words in **bold** print below. Feel free to use your books.

1. Parents should _______________ enforce their limits and house rules.

2. Parents must set aside time with their children to focus on the _______________ .

3. Parents should __________ before they speak and ___________ before they act.

4. For parents who __________ to give up, _____________ is possible.

positive **refuse** **plan** **think**

courageously **anything**

5. Finally, what was the most powerful idea you learned from this unit?

____

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information that is of interest to all. (Changes in group meeting times or location, etc.)

Check In:

A brief, one or two sentence statement is shared by each group member regarding something *positive* that occurred to them over the past week. When all members have shared, each member then signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting. Names and times are recorded below.

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or other group business are discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the "check in" process, take their time now. Individual concerns, problems and issues are discussed here.

Wrap Up:

Each member shares with the group how they are feeling at this point in the session. Statements of appreciation are encouraged. Good-byes are completed.

Homework Assignment:

Everyday this week, find time to spend with your child and focus on the **positive**. Bring back your stories to share with your support group.

My child and I were able to focus on the positive when we talked about:

Day 1:

Day 2:

Day 3:

Day 4:

Day 5

Day 6:

Day 7:

Self-Help Support Groups

Meeting Date: ___________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator: **Group Recorder:** **Group Time Keeper:** **Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:**

Check In:

Sign Up For Time: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

Group Time:

____

____

Individual Time:

____

____

____

____

____

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ____________

Announcements:

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Individual Time:

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ____________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

____
____

Individual Time:

____
____
____
____
____

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ____________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

____
____

Individual Time:

____
____
____
____
____

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ___________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

____
____

Individual Time:

____
____
____
____
____

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ____________

Announcements:

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

Individual Time:

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ___________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

____
____

Individual Time:

____
____
____
____
____

Wrap Up:

Meeting Date: ____________

Announcements:

____

Group Assignments:

Group Facilitator:
Group Recorder:
Group Time Keeper:
Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Check In:

Sign Up For Time:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Group Time:

____
____

Individual Time:

____
____
____
____
____

Wrap Up:

Support Group Format

Announcements:

Make brief announcements of any information of interest to all. Changes in group meeting times or location, etc. would be announced at this time.

Group Role Assignments:

Members are assigned roles as group facilitator, recorder, time keeper and nurturer or cheerleader. Group assignments should be rotated from meeting to meeting.

Check In:

A brief (one or two sentence) statement from each group member regarding something **positive** that occurred to them over the past week. During the Check In period, each member also signs up for the amount of the group's time he/she is requesting.

Group Time:

Group process issues are discussed and resolved at this time. Questions regarding confidentiality, group roles or group business are appropriately discussed here.

Individual Time:

Group members who signed up for time during the check in process, take their time now. They may specifically ask for help, advice or just to be listened to.

Wrap Up:

Each member uses this time to state how they are feeling and to say good-bye to the group. *Wrap Up* signifies the end of the meeting.

Support Group Roles

Group Facilitator:

The group task master, keeps the group on track. Insures that the group follows the meeting format and procedures.

Group Time Keeper:

Monitors the time for the group during all group activities. Helps members during Individual Time by giving a one or two minute warning before their time runs out.

Group Recorder:

Records the group responses/decisions during activities, group and individual time.

Group Nurturers/Cheerleaders:

Help the group to focus on the positive. Give and encourage positive strokes to individual members. Promote member's participation. Discourage confrontations, criticisms and judgmental behavior.

Ground Rules for Working in Groups

Confidentiality:

Trust between members is the foundation of group success. In order to develop trust, people must feel sure of confidentiality. Confidentiality is generally interpreted as, "What is heard in the group, remains in the group."

The support group as a whole must decide:

- Can group members talk to each other outside of the group regarding something heard in the group?
- Can material be discussed outside the group if the persons name is not used?
- Can information be shared with spouses or roommates?
- Should the member speaking need to ask for confidentiality in each specific case?

After extensive group discussion, the level of confidentiality is set by the most conservative member's definition.

W.I.S.E. Advice:

Advice is an important part of support groups, but members must be careful when giving advice. Tips for constructive advice are:

Willing	Is the person ready to hear the advice? If a person asks, "What should I do?" and waits and listens, they are willing. But, if a person responds to suggestions by saying, "Yes, but.....", they are not yet willing.
Informed	Before giving advice, be sure of all of the facts. What has the person already tried?
Success	Is your advice something you have tried and had success with in the past?
Empathy	Does the advice show a strong understanding for the member's feelings.

Right To Pass:

Group members do not always have to participate in group discussions. Members who have had a particularly bad day, or those who find the topic of discussion too painful, may not wish to participate. Members have a *right to pass* without offering an explanation to the group.

Time Limits:

Groups should start and end on time. After signing up for individual time, group members may give some of their time to another member in need, but the total meeting time is not extended. Group activities should also end on time.

Democracy:

Support groups must be run on democratic principles. Meeting times, locations and group process, etc., are decided by majority vote.

Brainstorming Norms

quantity vs. quality:

There are no wrong answers in a brainstorming activity. Members should throw out to the group all ideas.

OK to piggy back:

If a member can improve upon, or add to a another member's idea, they should do so. Remember, once an idea or thought has been spoken aloud, it belongs to the group.

avoid being judgmental:

Support groups should be a safe, positive place for everyone. Brainstorming activities require the brain power of the entire group to be successful and judging responses often shuts down the creative process.

off the wall/ creative responses:

Be as creative as possible. Don't worry about how the idea will be accomplished. Often the best solutions stem from this concept.